

Education for All



EFA National Report

Republic of Korea

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I. Introduction

Beginning in Jomtien in 1990 and upgraded in Dakar in 2000, EFA (Education for All) is now at a new stage, leaving less than one year for achievement before reaching its deadline in 2015. The international community will assess the achievements and activities related to EFA in order to move into new directions and forms of cooperation for global educational development by 2030 at the World Education Forum, which will be held in Incheon in 2015.

In this regard, EFA National Reports that will be shared with the international community has critical meaning not only at the national level but also at the international level. Republic of Korea recognizes this importance. Therefore, this report has been written under close cooperation with the Ministry of Education and researchers who have expertise in the six goals of EFA.

Korea has experienced colonial rule from 1910 to 1945 and the Korean War from 1950 to 1953. Following such a painful period, Korea was put in a devastating situation in all aspects of political, economic, social, and cultural arenas. However, a half century later, Korea has achieved economic growth that is epitomized by industrialization and social development that is symbolized by democratization. Many experts point out Korea's educational development as a critical factor that contributed to economic and societal development.

When Korean children are four to five years old, many of them are sent to private kindergarten ahead of elementary school. Korean children then go through 6 years of elementary school, 3 years of middle school, and another 3 years of high school education.

Korea achieved universal enrolment rates at the elementary school level by the 1960s, middle school level by the 1970s, and high school level by the 1980s. While Korea had only 10 higher education institutions in the 1950s, by the year 2010, Korea had over 200. The Republic of Korea had already achieved many of the EFA goals, especially in terms of quantity, during its rapid growth period of the 1980s and 1990s.

However, as social development oftentimes comes with many side effects, Korea's impressive educational development also comes with many challenges.

Our authors attempt to make contribution to the ongoing discussion of post-EFA agendas through this EFA national report by not only introducing the progresses made and the strategies used to achieve the six EFA goals, but also recognizing future challenges and solutions in educational development.

For example, growing rates of illiteracy due to the influx of immigrant workers, marriage migrants and their children highlight the need for not only a greater discourse on cultural diversity but also issues related to illiteracy that were previously forgotten in Korea. This phenomenon may not be limited to Korean society.

The joint proposal of the EFA steering committee, which went through the active exchange of opinions at the Global EFA Meeting (GEM) held in Oman in May 2014, propose the overarching goal for the post-2015 discussion, as follows:

*“Ensure equitable and inclusive quality education
and lifelong learning for all by 2030”*

According to this goal, quality education and lifelong learning for all are required by 2030. Meanwhile, the two words that define features of quality education and lifelong learning attract attention. That is, education and learning should be ‘equitable’ and ‘inclusive’.

From the perspective of UNESCO, which views the right to education as a basic human right, this goal can be taken for granted. However, deeper reflection is needed as we are preparing for a post-EFA agenda. In other words, we need to ask whether there are inequitable and exclusive forms of education and learning in our own society. In addition, we need to pose the same question to the international community. Of course, this is not the easy question to answer, but it is a shared challenge that the international community should overcome together for the post-EFA or post-2015 discussions and cooperation.

II. Tracking Progress & Review of Strategies

2.1. Expanding and Improving Early Childhood Care and Education

2.1.1. Tracking Progress

The first goal of EFA is to expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Early childhood care and education (henceforth referred to as ECCE) in the Republic of Korea (ROK) have a history of more than 100 years. The first kindergarten was established by Koreans in 1913 to provide education for Korean children during the colonial period. Also, in 1914, a department of early childhood teacher training at the college level was established for the first time by US missionaries.

In 1976, the first five public kindergartens were established, and by 1986, they dramatically increased to almost 2,000 through the early childhood education support policies. Most of the public kindergartens were established in rural areas while private kindergartens took up a large proportion in urban areas. As the number of kindergartens surged, so did the demand for teachers. In 1991, the Saemaul Nursery under the Ministry of Home Affairs was converted into a kindergarten, operated by the Ministry of Education or a daycare center under the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. In the 1990s, as the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs expanded childcare facilities, providing over 12 hours of services per day, the Ministry of Education came to adopt care services into the kindergarten system.

ECCE in the Republic of Korea has made significant progress over the last 15 years. The enrolment rates in ECCE services have remarkably increased, and the quality of services has been enhanced in many aspects. In order to ensure equity and quality of services, the Korean government has dramatically increased investment expenditure on ECCE.

Free education and care for children at age 5 were initiated in rural areas in 1999 for the first time and has become universal since 2012. It has been extended to include all 3 and 4-year-olds in 2013 (the enrolment rate for children ages 3 to 5 is almost 90%). Furthermore, free childcare has been provided to children ages 0 to 2 since 2012, and childrearing allowances are given to parents who do not use any ECCE services and raise their children at home.

Korea belongs to a list of countries with one of the lowest infant mortality rates (2.9 per 1000 live births as of 2012) (National Office of Statistics, 2013). Teacher-child ratios in kindergartens have dropped from 18.8 to 14.5 from years 2000 to 2012. The ECCE budget per child in kindergartens has increased 3.5 times from 2005 to 2012 (see Table 2.1.1).

The quality of ECCE services also has been improved to a considerable extent. The proportion of kindergarten teachers with a bachelor's degree has increased to over 50% in 2012, compared to 26.3% in 2001 (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2012). The proportion of childcare teachers with 1st and 2nd level licenses (ISCED Level 5) has increased, making up 45% and 47%, respectively, in 2012. Childcare accreditation started in 2005; currently, 85% of all 42,528 childcare centres have been accredited (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2012). All public and most private kindergartens have been evaluated since 2008.

<Table 2.1.1> Progresses in ECCE in ROK

Classification	2000/2001	2012
Gross Enrolment Rates	27.2%	74.1 % (Age 3-5: 86.3%; Age 0-2: 62%)
Infant Mortality Rate	6.2‰	2.9‰
Teacher-Child Ratio*	KG- 1:18.8 CC-1:10.9	KG- 1: 14.5 CC- 1: 6.3 (2010)
ECCE Budget Per Child (in Thousand KRW)	KG: 1,178(2005) CC: 1,715(2005)	KG: 5,400 (2012) CC: 4,207 (2010)

Notes: KG stands for kindergartens and CC for childcare centres; Teacher-child ratios in childcare centres are regulated by the age of the child [1:3 (under 1 yr.), 1:5 (1 yr.), 1: 7 (2 yrs.), 1:15 (3 yrs.), 1:20 (4 & 5 yrs.)] (Childcare Act, amended in 2010)

Sources: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. (2010-2012). *Annual Report on Early Childhood Education*. Ministry of Health and Welfare. (2012). *National Survey on Childcare*.

In particular, legislation of the Child Care Act in 1991 served as a turning point, providing the legal basis for childcare in Korea. On the other hand, early childhood education, based originally on the Education Act (1949), came to have its own independent act, Early Childhood Education in 2004 by reorganizing related ordinances spread in *Early Childhood Education Promotion Act (1982-2004)* and *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1997-)*. The Korean government is also making notable progress in consolidating the ECCE system, which has long been a major challenge. Korea's ECCE has a split system with separate goals and regulations, services, governance, delivery system, teacher training and so on. Education service for 3-to-5-year-olds is provided by kindergartens and governed by the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for school and lifelong education. Care service for 0-to-5-year-olds is offered by childcare centres and governed by the Ministry of Health and Welfare. Therefore, children in the same age group receive different care and education services according to the institutions that they attend (see Table 2.1.2).

<Table 2.1.2> ECCE System in ROK

Early Childhood Education	Classification	Child Care
Ages 3-5	Target Age	Ages 0-5
Kindergarten	Service Institution	Childcare Centre
Ministry of Education/Local Office of Education	Auspice	Ministry of Health and Welfare/Local Government
Early Childhood Education Act (2004)	Legislation	Childcare Act (1991)
Kindergarten Curriculum (1969-2012) Nuri Curriculum (Ages 3-5, 2012/2013)	Curriculum	Standard Childcare Curriculum (Ages 0-2)/Nuri Curriculum (Ages 3-5, 2012/2013)
Kindergarten Teacher License (Level 1 & 2) 2, 3, 4 Year College Training Programmes	Teacher Qualification and Training	Childcare Teacher License (Levels 1, 2, & 3) 1 Year After High School Graduation, 2, 3, 4 Year College Training Programmes
Kindergarten Evaluation (2008)	Quality Assurance	Childcare Accreditation (2005)

Source: Moon, M. (2013). Early childhood education and care in Korea, In Ministry of Education, Sciences and Technology (2013), *Education, Science and Technology in Korea 2012*.

2.1.2. Review of Policies and Strategies

In the past, early childhood care and education were one of the least acknowledged areas of policy in Korea. On the contrary, as for free and compulsory elementary and middle school education (9 years in total), ECCE for children ages 0 to 5 has been mainly provided by individual families or private institutions. Recently, ECCE became a priority in the national policy agenda due to the low birth rate and increase of working mothers as well as the recognition of the importance of early childhood development. A considerable amount of research findings on human brain development and cost-benefit analysis reported that the human brain develops dramatically in the early years, and that human capital investments in early childhood yield the highest rates of return. Like in other countries, socio-demographic changes and research have raised awareness of ECCE as a public good by politicians and other stakeholders in Korea to a great extent.

Reflecting upon the development and accomplishments of ECCE in Korea, there are several policy lessons to be shared. It is important to establish policy goals for the development and learning of children that promote an equal starting point from the onset of birth, focusing on health, happiness, and interests of children rather than on the needs and demands of adults and society. Since poor-quality ECCE services can influence children's learning and development negatively, policy goals for quality with equity need to be set. In addition, short, mid and long-term policy plans and strategies for the effective implementation of policy goals need to be developed. Some representative examples of Korea include the Plan for the Advancement of Early Childhood Education (2009-2012), I-Sarang Plan (Child-Loving Plan) (2009-2012) and Free Education and Care Initiative with the Nuri Curriculum for Children Aged 3 to 5 (2012-2013), and Five-Year Plan of Development of Early Childhood Education (2013-2017).

Universal Provision of ECCE Services

A universal approach to ECCE has been achieved for children ages 0 to 5 since 2012/13. The fact that the number of ECCE service providers has increased can be positively evaluated, as ECCE institutions ease the childrearing burden of parents. However, the economic burden of parents has increased because the proportion of private ECCE service providers is very high by catering for about 80% of children in kindergartens and 90% in childcare centres (see Table 3). Thus, the Korean government currently seeks to expand public kindergartens and childcare centres at the national level.

<Table 2.1.3> Current Status of ECCE in ROK (2012)

Classification		Facilities	Children	Teachers	Teacher-Child Ratio
Kindergarten (Ages 3-5)	National/Public	4,525	127,347	9,969	12.8
	Private	4,013	486,402	32,266	15.1
	Sub-Total	8,538	613,749	42,235	14.5
Child Care Centre (Ages 0-5)	N/Public	2,116	143,035	15,376	9.3
	Legal Corporate	1,462	112,688	12,037	9.4
	Private	15,004	757,323	90,179	8.4
	Parent	89	2,286	328	7
	Workplace	449	24,987	3,651	6.8
	Family	20,722	308,410	58,674	5.3
	Sub-Total	39,842	1,348,729	180,245	7.5
Total		48,380	1,962,478	222,480	8.8

Sources: Korean Educational Development Institute & Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. (2012). *Annual Statistics on Education*. Ministry of Health and Welfare. (2012). *Annual Statistics on Childcare*.

Financial Support Policies

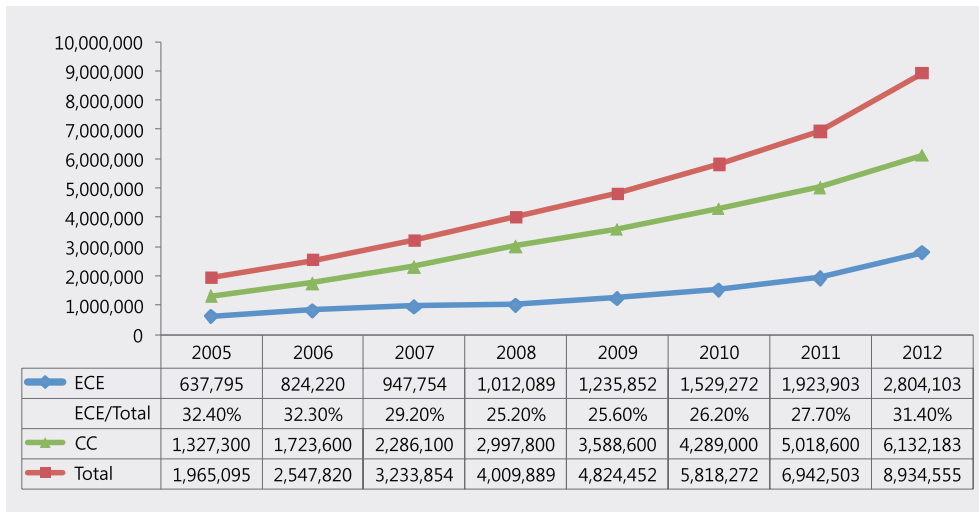
In particular, investment in ECCE at the national level is an urgent imperative. A strong political will must be present to secure public funding for ECCE in a sustainable manner, even during this economic crisis, in order to provide quality services to the most disadvantaged children.

In 2013, the total annual public budget of ECCE was about 12 trillion won, increasing threefold when compared to 2005. It accounts for 0.9% of GDP, showing a remarkable increase compared to 0.62% of GDP in 2008 and 0.05% in 2003.

Supporting policies were initiated over a decade, including policies for free education and care for children in rural areas (1999), kindergarten and childcare tuition fee support for 5-year-olds from families from the lowest 70% of income households (2003), free ECCE for children with special needs (2003), kindergarten and childcare tuition fee support for 3 and 4-year-olds on a sliding scale (2004), basic childcare subsidies for

<Figure 2.1.1 > Total Public Expenditure on ECCE in ROK (2005-2012)

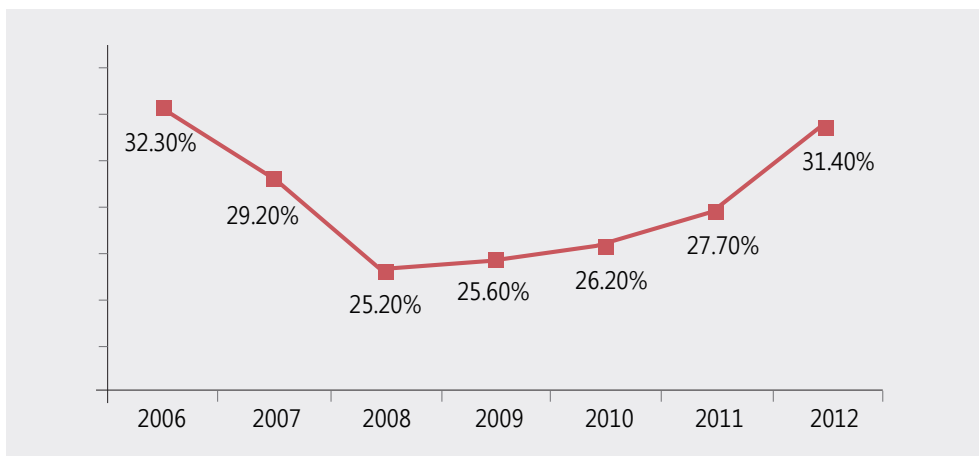
(Unit: 1 million KRW)



Note: ECE stands for Early Childhood Education and CC for Child Care; ECCE budget does not include salaries of national/public kindergarten teachers; Childcare budget does not include local government budget; Spending of the Nuri curriculum both for KG and CC was added to the early childhood education budget as of 2012

Sources: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. (2010-2012). *Annual Report on Early Childhood Education 2009-2011*. Ministry of Health and Welfare. (Each year). *Internal report on childcare budget*.

<Figure 2.1.2> ECCE Rate of Increase



Sources: Ministry of Education, Sciences and Technology (2010-2013). *Annual report on early childhood education, 2009-2012*. Ministry of Health and Welfare (annually). *Internal Report on Child Care Budget*.

children under age 2 (2007), kindergarten and childcare tuition fee support for all 5-year-old children from families with average income levels (2009), full-day kindergarten subsidies (2009), free childcare for children under age 2 (2012), and free education and care for all 5-year-olds (2012) and for all 3 and 4-year-olds (2013). Free education and care with the Nuri curriculum are provided for 15 to 25 hours a week (3 to 5 hours a day) subsidized at 220,000 KRW per month per child as of 2013.

<Table 2.1.4> Support Policies (1999-2013)

Sept. 1999	Free ECCE for 5 yr. olds of low-income families in rural areas
Feb. 2000	Expend to 5 yr. olds of low-income families in nation-wide
2004	Subsidies for 3 & 4 yr olds on sliding scales
2005	Subsidies for families with more than two children
Mar. 2007	Expending to children of families with average urban income
2007/8	Basic subsidies for children 0 to 2
Mar. 2009	Full-day program subsidies for children from low-income families
2010	Child-rearing allowances
Mar. 2012	Free ECCE for 5 yr. olds & free childcare for C 0 to 2
Mar. 2013	Free ECEC extended to 3 & 4 yr olds.

Enhancing Quality

Korea's efforts to enhance the quality of ECCE have unfolded in various ways, including curriculum, teacher training, quality assurance, regulations, governance, data collection, research and more. Recently, the Korean government has made a new attempt to ensure quality ECCE services by introducing the Nuri Curriculum¹, implemented towards all children commonly in kindergartens and childcare centres. Previously, the National Kindergarten Curriculum since 1969 and the Standard Childcare Curriculum since 2007 were separately implemented in kindergartens and childcare centres. 'Nuri,' a Korean word, refers to the world. It signifies the wish for education and care services provided by the government to actively contribute to children learning and leading happy lives that open up a world in which they can fulfil their hopes and dreams.

For disadvantaged children, the Korean government initiated the Support Policy for the Development of Young Children's Basic Learning Abilities (2007) under the proposition that the development of basic learning abilities in the early years would be one of the most effective strategies in achieving the dual goals of eliminating social barriers and of

efficiently cultivating human resources. A set of tools to diagnose learning difficulties of children as well as programmes for children's language, cognitive, social and emotional development were developed and implemented in 2008. Moreover, a comprehensive master plan of educational welfare and Dream Start were initiated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Health and Welfare, respectively, to secure equity and quality of services for disadvantaged children.

Teacher qualifications and continual professional development are critical in upgrading service quality. The Office for Childcare Teachers Certification Management was established in 2007 to verify and systemize such qualifications. Various types of teacher allowances and subsidies are provided to ECCE teachers through equivalent matching of the rewards between teachers of public and private sectors. In addition, since 2009, short-term substitute teachers have been provided to private sectors to support teachers' parental leave and professional development.

In order to observe quality regulations and standards, the childcare accreditation and kindergarten evaluation systems have been in operation since 2005 and 2008, respectively. Since 2010, a consulting system has been initiated in kindergartens and childcare centres to provide more individually tailored advice to teachers and institutions.

To develop ways to further integrate ECCE, in 2013, the Korean government launched a cross-ministry collaboration committee led by the Office for Government Policy Coordination Prime Minister's Secretariat. The further ECCE integrates within Korea, rich developmental and learning opportunities will be better provided to children in an equitable way and create a child-rearing environment trusted by parents.

2.1.3. Need for Further Development

In spite of its positive development and outcomes to date, ECCE in Korea faces some challenges. Integrating the ECCE system is perhaps the most difficult challenge because it requires a consensus among different stakeholder groups. More active networking and exchange between public and private services are needed since the majority of enrolled children and working teachers are found in private institutes. The strong parental preference for extracurricular activities, high child-teacher ratios in kindergartens, relatively low qualified childcare teachers (ISCED level 3) and ways to promote gender equality among ECCE service care providers deserve our attention.

Korea also needs to work on improved methods to engage parents better while valuing the holistic development of children rather than merely focusing on children's cognitive development and school readiness. Due to the multi-sectoral nature of ECCE, it is nec-

essary to coordinate diverse sectors such as health, nutrition, gender empowerment, labor, economy and more. A more integrated approach to ECCE would reduce overlaps and waste in human and material resources and strengthen networks, and thus, serve children and families better.

2.2. Achieving Universal Primary and Secondary Education

2.2.1. Tracking Progress

The second goal of EFA is to achieve universal primary education, meaning that all children have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality. Although the current goal only includes primary education, the universalization of secondary education is also covered in this section because free and compulsory education in the Republic of Korea has been achieved up to the secondary education level.

Korea achieved universal primary education in the early 1960s, universal lower secondary education in the early 1980s and upper secondary education in the late 1990s (universalization means that at least 95% of the student-aged population enrolls in school). In 1945, when Korea was liberated from Japan, the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) of primary school was below 54%. However, in 1960, one year following the six-year plan for compulsory primary education (1954-1959), GER attained universalization (95.3%) at the primary education level (Huh, 2009). The six-year plan for compulsory primary education (1945-1959) was a national initiative to improve access to primary education for all by increasing the number of classrooms, making accommodations for poor students, securing funds and supporting private school entry.

The expansion of secondary education is affected by the successful completion of primary education. The increased number of graduates from primary education leads to the increased demand for secondary education. However, different from the case of primary education, the universalization of secondary education took more time to be accomplished. For lower secondary education, universalization (95.1%) was achieved in 1980, and for upper secondary education, universalization (95.0%) was achieved in 1998.

Though enrolment rate for lower secondary education was only 41.4% in 1965, Korea achieved universalization (95.1%) at this level by 1980 (Huh, 2009). Similar to primary education, slight improvements have been ongoing at the secondary education level. Since the 2000s, the enrolment GER is around 96%. After achieving universal primary and secondary education, the Korean government shifted policy emphasis from

<Table 2.2.1> Progress in Primary and Secondary education

Classification		2000	2010	2012
GER	Primary Education	97.2%		98.6%
	Middle School	95.0%		96.1%
	High School	89.4%		92.6%
Total Public Expenditure on Education as a Percentage of GDP	Basic Education (Primary and Secondary)	4.0%	4.2%	
Public Current Expenditure Education per Pupil (Percentage of GDP per Capita)	Primary Education			
	Secondary (Middle and High)	\$3,155 (21%) \$4,069 (27%)	\$6,601 (23%) \$8,060 (28%)	
Student-Teacher Ratio	Primary Education	28.7		16.3
	Middle School	20.1		16.0
	High School	19.9		14.2
Class Size	Primary School	35.8		24.3
	Middle School	38.0		32.4
	High School	42.7		31.9
Dropout Rate	Primary Education	0.4		0.6
	Middle School	1.0		0.9
	High School	2.5		1.8

Note: Current expenditure is calculated using USD PPP (Purchasing Power Parity).

Source: Korean Educational Development Institute & Ministry of Education. (2013). *Brief statistics on Korean education*.

quantity to quality. In order to improve the quality of primary and secondary education, Korea has continuously reduced the teacher-student ratio by allocating a higher budget on education.

Public expenditure was the main source of development of basic education in Korea. Because increased investment on education resulted in more teachers and classrooms, higher public expenditure was positively correlated with better quality of education. As Table 1 shows, public expenditure on basic education increased slightly between 2000 and 2010. With the exception of one year of economic recession (2007-2008), the movement for better basic education continued.

The increased investment on education led to the better educational environment for all students. Better working conditions for teachers, such as higher salaries and more stable

positions through the increased education budget, attracted quality teachers so that more students could enjoy quality learning. Quality was also improved by establishing more schools for disadvantaged students.

Two often used indicators to describe the quality of the educational environment include Student-Teacher Ratio (STR) and Class Size (CS). In the 2000s, Korea improved STR and CS. Between 2000 and 2012, STR improved at the primary and lower secondary levels from 28.7:1 to 16:1 and from 20.1:1 to 16.0:1, respectively. During the same years, CS at the primary and lower secondary levels reduced from 35.8 to 24.3 and from 38.0 to 32.4, respectively. This improvement is a mixed result of a modest decrease of the student population and increased investment for a better educational environment.

Another indicator of the quality of basic education is the Dropout Rate (DR). A lower DR means that more students complete basic education. In the last fifteen years in Korea, DR has been very small, and the exit of students is limited. Moreover, most cases of dropout students were caused by non-school-related situations such as illness or going abroad. In practice, the number of dropout students due to school-related problems has been limited.

2.2.2. Review of Policies and Strategies

Today, in Korea, all children between the ages of 6-14 enjoy quality basic education regardless of gender, socio-economic background or region. There is no major discrimination regarding access to basic education for any reason. Moreover, affirmative action is applied to disadvantaged groups of students, such as disabled and low-income students.

Access to quality basic education is guaranteed in the national constitution and the Fundamentals of the Education Act. Free and compulsory education up to the basic education level (nine years) is enforced by law. In addition, three additional years of free education covering upper secondary education will be accomplished by 2017 under the new government education plan.

Primary and middle school students are able to learn within a safe school environment and with the guidance of academically qualified teachers. During normal school hours and through afterschool programmes (optional programmes for students who want supplementary education), students have access to quality basic education.

Several factors have contributed to Korea's success in achieving universal basic education: political willingness, effective planning and comprehensive execution of those plans.

Sequential Approach Based on Political Leadership and Government Plan

The strategy of the Korean government to achieve EFA goal 2 was to mobilize strong national political commitment and develop plans accordingly that focus on primary education as the foundation of educational development. In 1953, the Korean government established the six-year compulsory education completion plan (1954-1959). After universal primary education was achieved, the government focused its effort to extend educational opportunity in secondary education.

From the 1960s, the investment in secondary education increased and obstacles impeding the expansion of middle school entry, such as middle school entrance examinations, were removed. To respond to increased demand for secondary education, the Korean government also encouraged the opening of private middle schools by reducing regulations and providing incentives within the private sector. Private sector investment on education helped to accommodate demand for secondary education that the government could not fulfil. During the expansion of secondary education, private schools over 40% of Korean schools (Huh, 2009).

Increased Investment in Education

The cornerstone of the early establishment of universal basic education was financial support from the Korean government and international communities. Korea invested a large portion of its governmental budget to the development of primary education prior to the universalization of primary education. Under the educational development plan, the Korean government placed top priority on primary education. In 1954, 4.2% of the total government budget was allocated towards education, and 64.1% of the education budget was spent on primary education. Moreover, in 1960, the percentage of the education budget to the total budget soared to 15.2% with 80% of the education budget going to primary education.

After achieving universal primary education, the Korean government increased investment in secondary education. Through the Educational Taxes (1958-1961 and 1981-present) plan, the Korean government could improve school facilities and the quality of teachers through additional tax revenues. Also, through the Special Account for the Improvement of Educational Environment (1990-1992 and 1996-2000), the government could further upgrade school facilities, improve the national curriculum and provide special purpose education.

Furthermore, financial support through ODA (Official Development Assistance) helped Korea to restore its education system following the Korean War. Five years of foreign aid following the Korean War contributed to increased access to the basic education in

Korea (Huh, 2009). Among 14 billion dollars of international aid from 1960-1990, roughly 12.5% was put towards educational development (KOICA, 2004).

The successful use of foreign aid expedited Korea's efforts to achieve universal primary education. Strategic and effective use of foreign aid helped the initial development of Korean education.

Effective Management Strategy

The Korean government initially emphasized overall quantity in educational management strategy. Rather than turning students away when the number of students exceeded the appropriate capacity for a school, the government used the double-shift or three-shift school system, resulting in overcrowded classrooms, which was a realistic response to rapid urbanization and lack of funds for additional school buildings. In large cities like Seoul, schools using the double-shift system are estimated to have been 65-75% between the years 1957 and 1959 (Huh, 2009). However, after achieving primary education and securing a stable education budget through special educational taxes, Korean schools gradually moved into a one-shift school system. Eventually, government strategy shifted emphasis on the improvement of quality of educational development.

Strong Support from Parents Formed Basis of Respect for Education

Another factor to effectively achieve EFA goal 2 was to ensure the engagement and participation of community members living around the school. The school support network, including the PTA (Parent-Teacher-Association) and private beneficiaries, financially supplemented any deficits from government funding. In the 1950s, over 70% of school finances were provisioned through the school support network (Huh, 2009). School-community members provided funding for restoring buildings and classrooms and tuition support for poor students.

The strongly centralized and effectively managed governmental system combined with a well-planned education strategy, active participation and financial support from community members and aid from overseas all contributed to Korea's achievement of EFA goal 2.

2.2.3. Need for Further Development

The quality of basic education measured by the Teacher-Student Ratio, Class Size and Dropout Rate shows the strength of Korean primary and secondary education. Access to qualified teachers regardless of student background, curriculum based on common core standards and continuous efforts to improve teacher quality through evaluation

and training help make Korean education one of the best in the world as indicated in international student examination such as TIMSS and PISA.

However, there are some challenges to be solved in the future for better quality education. The issue of high Teacher-Student Ratio compared to other developed countries must be improved. Within comparatively larger class sizes, children do not get enough individualized attention from teachers. Furthermore, additional, affirmative action policies for disadvantaged students are needed. At the basic education level, students from low-income and poor socio-economic backgrounds are at a disadvantage in securing private supplementary education compared to students from middle and upper-class backgrounds.

It is questionable that the present education system in Korea can raise creative personnel for leadership within a knowledge-based society. According to DeSECo project led by the OECD (1997-2003), competencies needed for the 21st century consist of using tools interactively, interacting in heterogeneous groups and acting autonomously (OECD, 2005). The main goal of the Korean education system should now focus on improving such core competencies within students.

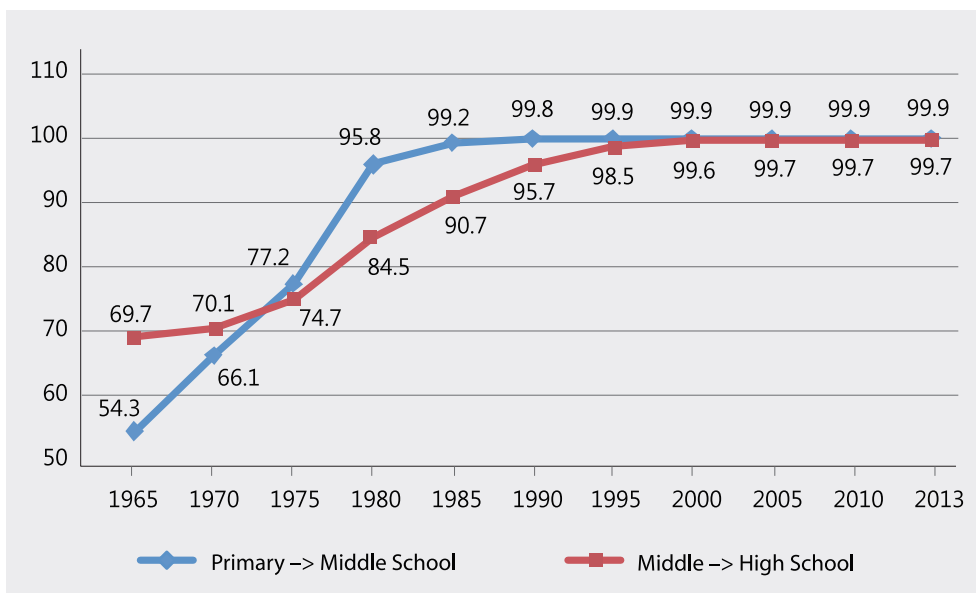
2.3. Promoting Learning and Life Skills for Youth and Adults

2.3.1. Tracking Progress

The third goal of EFA is to promote learning and life skills for youth and adults in order to offer adequate learning and life skills essential for their basic right to learn. Although this third aim is facing criticism for being too vague to achieve since it does not suggest any clear tasks or detailed missions, this section will focus on how Korea has been going about to promote learning and life skills for youth and adults by looking at the universalization of secondary education and the systematization of lifelong education. The picture below shows that the enrolment rates at the primary level of education in Korea skyrocketed from 50% in 1945, right after Korea's independence, to 95.3% in 1960. Then, in the 1960s and 1970s, secondary education began to expand rapidly. Abolishment of the Middle School Entrance Exam (1968) and High School Equalization Policy (1974) promoted the enrolment at the secondary education level.

Moreover, in 1974, the Open Upper Secondary School (a former Air and Correspondence High School) was established, and industry-affiliated middle and high schools, as well as regular middle and high schools, were compelled to offer special night courses for expanding educational opportunities for youth and adults who could or did not receive formal education.

<Figure 2.3.1> Middle and High School Advancement Rates (1965-2013)



Source: Korean Educational Development Institute. (2013). *An analysis of educational statistics: Early Childhood, primary and secondary school level*. Seoul, Korea: Korean Educational Development Institute.

The Open Upper Secondary School was established in 1974 and currently provides blended programmes through offline classes (twice per month) and online programmes. As of 2014, offline classes are operating at 42 public high schools under 16 education offices. When it was founded in 1974, the School operated at 11 schools and provided courses via radio; however, since 2009, Internet based e-learning has replaced the radio system. In 2012, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act secured the legal basis for Open Lower Secondary Schools. Based on this act, the Open Lower Secondary School was founded in 2013.

As access to secondary education became common and universalized, vocational education and training was also enhanced greatly in the 1960s. In 1963, the vocational high school curriculum was promulgated along with the five-year Scientific and Technological Education Promotion Plan (1976-1971). As industrialization of the heavy chemical industry boomed in the 1970s, the demand for skilled workers grew bigger. By the same token, a policy to support vocational high schools was introduced during that period, thus leading the development of vocational education and training with the technical high schools at the center.

As this indicates, the government's strong support for the expansion of vocational education and training made it possible for the number of vocational high schools to grow

from 481 in 1960 to 605 in 1980, establishing its percentage of 44.7% of all high schools. By the 1980s, higher education began to expand significantly, and in the 1990s, policies to expand and improve high school vocational education were pursued. Such policies include the establishment of quotas of regular high-school students to vocational high-school students at that of an equal 50:50 ratio, and to enhance learning facilities at vocational high schools. Other policies attempted to alleviate excessive competition for university entrance and to strengthen the relationship between the high school education system and training of industrial manpower. As seen in the Table 2.3.1, the percentage of vocational high schools and students of vocational high schools increased. However, the number of students in vocational high schools has gradually been decreasing since 2000.

<Table 2.3.1> Number of Regular High Schools and Vocational High Schools (1965-2010)

		1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Number of Schools	Total	701	889	1,152	1,353	1,602	1,683	1,830	1,957	2,095	2,253
	Regular	389	408	673	748	967	1,096	1,068	1,193	1,382	1,561
	Vocational	312	481	479	605	635	587	762	764	713	692
	% of V	44.5	54.1	41.6	44.7	39.6	34.9	41.6	39.0	34.0	30.7
		1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Number of Students (1,000 Persons)	Total	426	590	1,123	1,697	2,153	2,284	2,158	2,071	1,763	1,962
	Regular	254	315	648	933	1,267	1,473	1,246	1,324	1,260	1,496
	Vocational	172	275	475	764	886	811	912	747	503	466
	% of V	40.4	46.6	42.3	45.0	41.2	35.5	42.3	36.1	28.5	23.8

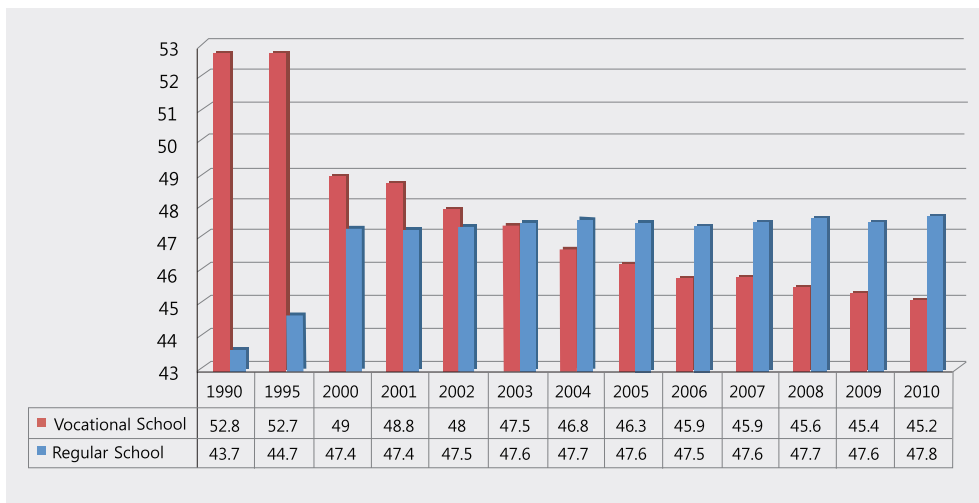
Note: % of V stands for the percentage of Vocational High School.

Source: Ministry of Education. (2013). *Statistical Yearbook of Education*. Ministry of Education & Korean Education Development Institute. Retrieved from <http://kess.kedi.re.kr/index>

According to the Figure 2.3.2, the percentage of female students in regular high schools reflects a small change, constituting 43% in 1990 and around 47% since the 2000s. On the other hand, in 2002, the percentage of female students in vocational high schools exceeded that of female students in regular high schools before it gradually decreased. By 2003, the percentage of female students in regular high schools exceeded the ratio of female students in vocational high schools.

With the advent of the knowledge-information society in the 1990s, both junior (two year) and senior (four year) colleges strived to foster many students highly skilled in technology. Furthermore, in 1965, 83.6% of participants in vocational education and

<Figure 2.3.2> Percentage of Female Students in Regular High Schools and Vocational High Schools



Source: Ministry of Education. (2013). *Statistical Yearbook of Education*. Ministry of Education & Korean Education Development Institute. Retrieved from <http://kess.kedi.re.kr/index>

training colleges originated from vocational high schools, 11.2% from junior colleges, and 5.2% from work places or a vocational education center. However, the percentages respectively changed to 9.8%, 15.4%, and 74.9% in 2008 (Jin, 2010, pp. 549-550), which shows that skilled techniques and lifelong vocational training are now strongly recommended to accommodate a rapidly diversifying labor market. The education system must transform to the lifelong education system where one can continuously learn and work.

In reaction to this economical and societal change, the government decided to add an article that assures the government's duty in promoting lifelong education of all people in the 1980s constitutional amendment. Furthermore, in 1982, the Social Education Act, a former law of the current Lifelong Education Act, was legislated and promulgated. In 1999, the name of the law changed to the Lifelong Education Act, and it was completely reformed in December 2007 to establish a holistic Education Welfare state. With the revision of Lifelong Education Act in 2007, the National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE) was established as a central government arm for planning and implementing lifelong learning policies. Moreover, the Lifelong Education Act stipulated and installed the regional institute for lifelong education within provincial governments, and also the lifelong learning center within local governments.

2.3.2. Review of Policies and Strategies

Reflecting the Demand of the Labor Market in Vocational Education and Training

As discussed in the previous section, Korea has accomplished the universalization of elementary and secondary education, and has an enrolment rate in higher education of around 70% (70.4% in 2009; 71% 2011; 69% in 2013) (Ministry of Education & Korean Educational Development Institute, 2013, p. 19). Secondary education became common in the 1970s, well known as the era of heavy chemical industries, and therefore, vocational education and training developed dramatically to produce adequate human resources to satisfy demand at that time. It was the policies on promoting vocational high schools and reinforcing a vocational training system that contributed to the successful industrialization of Korea in the 1970s by supplying enough skilled and technically savvy manpower accordingly.

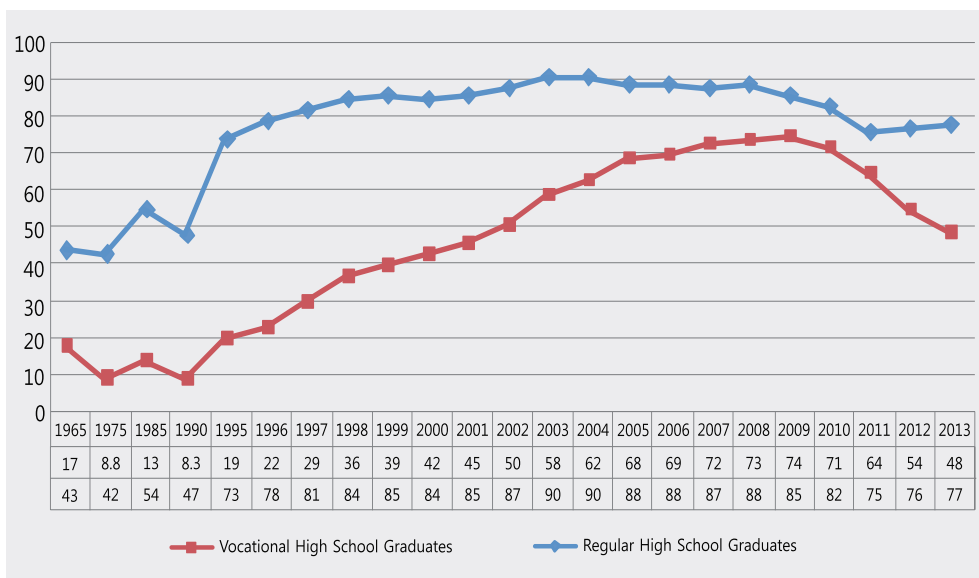
Although abolishment of the middle school entrance exam and high school equalization policy contributed to the significant expansion of secondary education, it is also true that the demand from the labor market, which called for a higher skilled laborer in possession of a secondary education, had a certain influence on the universalization of secondary education.

Since 2000, the percentage of students who choose to enter vocational high schools started to decrease while the percentage of students who enter colleges after graduation from vocational high schools steadily increased (8.3% in 1990; 42% in 2000; 67.6% in 2005; 71.1% in 2010; see Figure 3). The expansion of higher education and avoidance of vocational high schools have caused a problem: mismatch between demand and supply in the labor market. To address the problem, the government implemented policies on promoting vocational high schools. To cultivate talented human resources, specialized high schools were introduced, and the employment rate of graduates has been on the increase since 2010. Moreover, a few high schools that are provided with a better environment for vocational education, among those specialized high schools, are selected and designated as Meister High School. When designated as a Meister High School, the school receives major support from the government. Graduates from specialized high schools can freely choose his or her own career path – either finding a job or entering a college; however, the graduates from a Meister High School must find a job right after graduation. In order to strengthen individual's competitiveness and respond quickly to the change in business and industry, Meister High Schools develop their own curriculum and textbooks, and also recruit CEO type school principals who have had earlier careers in various industries. In this manner, overall vocational education and training policies have been enforced by the government, dealing with the economic and societal changes with promptness and

agility. Two to three year vocational colleges, whose mission is to nurture junior professionals in technology, have been recognized as higher vocational education institutions by conferring vocational bachelor's degrees to the graduates since 1997.

As Korea's industrial sector developed rapidly, much emphasis was placed on industry-university cooperation, and following this trend, the government decided to provide financial support based on the 1996 policy called the Industry-University Cooperation for Vocational Colleges. A vocational college can create an agreement with a specific industry, and reflect the industry's needs to the curriculum so that it can train the students accordingly. The vocational colleges or the industrial college can also contribute to the establishment of the lifelong education system for adults all the more because they are fully equipped with faculties, apparatus and materials, as well as the curriculum that fits the sustainable development of vocational abilities and training for these adults.

<Figure 2.3.3> Advancement rate of Vocational and Regular High School Graduates



Source: Korean Educational Development Institute & Ministry of Education. (2007). (2010). (2013). *Brief Statistics on Korean Education*.

Expanding Access to Learning Opportunities with a Diversified Lifelong Educational System

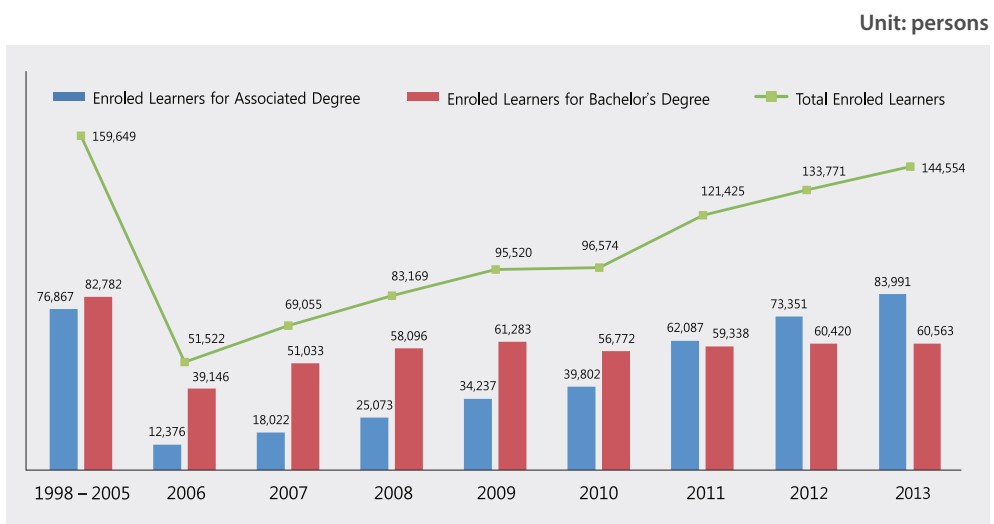
Meanwhile, for the youth and adults who had limited learning opportunities under the formal school system, policies such as Open Secondary Schools, Korea National Open University, Academic Credit Bank System (ACBS) and Bachelor's Degree Examination for Self-Education (BDES) have made it possible for citizens to learn anytime and any-

where, and aim to foster a lifelong learning society. Open Secondary Schools in Korea are established for people who cannot afford traditional educational opportunities under formal secondary education for various reasons, such as social and financial constraints. Furthermore, this is to improve the level of education for all people in Korea by expanding and establishing lifelong education.

Korea National Open University (a former Korea Air & Correspondence College), as Korea's first national distance education university, played a pivotal role in national open education and the generalization of university education by providing higher and lifelong educational opportunities to those previously excluded from the formal education system for reasons related to social, economic, age, and time limitations. Since its inception in 1972 with five departments and approximately 10,000 officially enrolled students, KNOU has grown into a major university that now has 22 departments with about 160,000 enrolled students — a number that is 8 to 10 times greater than regular universities (as of 2012).

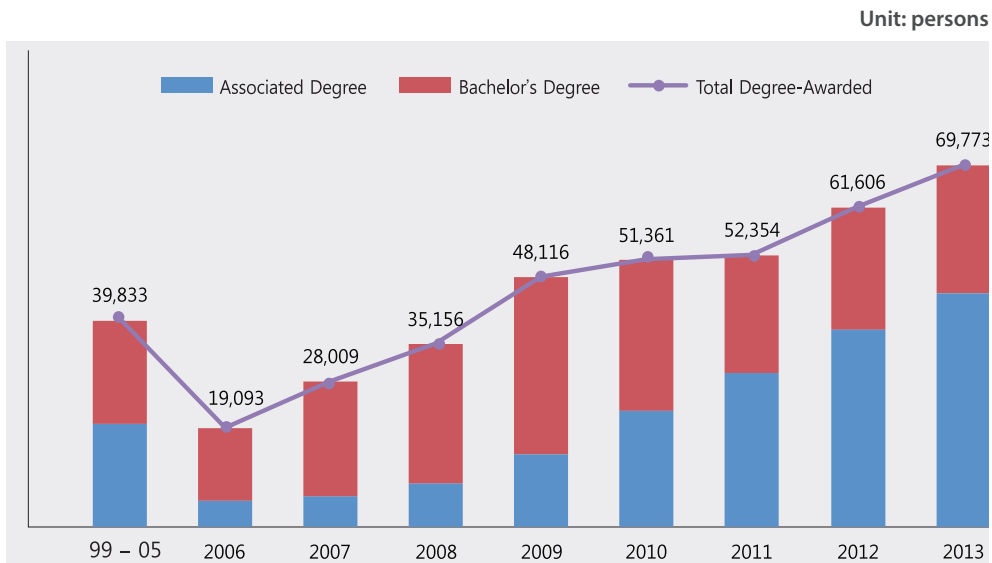
The Academic Credit Bank System (ACBS) is an open educational system that recognizes diverse learning experiences gained not only in-school but also out-of-school. When a learner accumulates the necessary ACBS-approved credits, he or she can be awarded a degree from either a junior college (two years) or a senior college (four years). The ACBS began with government endorsement through a legal act, ratified by the Act on Recognition of Credits in 1997, and it seeks to innovate, diversify and maximize the educational opportunities for all citizens and to foster a lifelong learning society. The number of enrolled learners and degree-awarded learners are as follows:

<Figure 2.3.4> Number of Enrolled Learners



Source: National Institute for Lifelong Education. Academic Credit Bank System homepage. <http://www.cb.or.kr>

<Figure 2.3.5> Number of Degree-Awarded Learners



Source: National Institute for Lifelong Education. Academic Credit Bank System homepage. <http://www.cb.or.kr>

Bachelor's Degree Examination for Self-Education (BDES) endorsed by The Law of Bachelor's Degree Examination for Self-Education (1990) makes it possible for people to obtain a bachelor's degree without attending a regular college or university by passing the four-step examination administered by the government. BDES also contributes to foster an open lifelong learning society by providing alternative educational opportunities for higher education to people who experience social and financial difficulties and by testing self-taught applicants' qualifications to receive a bachelor's degree.

2.3.3. Need for Future Development

The lifelong education system in Korea is based on the Lifelong Education Act, and middle and long-term goals are set every five years in order to promote lifelong education. The first Lifelong Education Promotion Plan that lasted from 2002 to 2006 established the grounds for lifelong education. The second Lifelong Education Promotion Plan that lasted from 2008 to 2012 brought about critical transition in the lifelong education system through strengthening the networks between the National Institute for Lifelong Education and the Center for Lifelong Education. Targeted specifically towards a growing retired and elderly population, as of 2013, the third Lifelong Education Promotion Plan was set up to actualize happiness for all through creative lifelong learning.

Today, Korea strives to establish a foundation for flexible lifelong learning in the face of

a rapidly changing economy and of its aging society. It is necessary to support lifelong education for marginalized groups of society and to improve their vocational abilities and specialties that link to employment opportunities for the retired population and elder generations. To do so, learning capacity of local society should be reinforced and prepared, as should centres for vocational education and training and universities with a variety of educational programmes open to all people young and old.

2.4. Reducing Adult Illiteracy by 50%

2.4.1. Tracking Progress

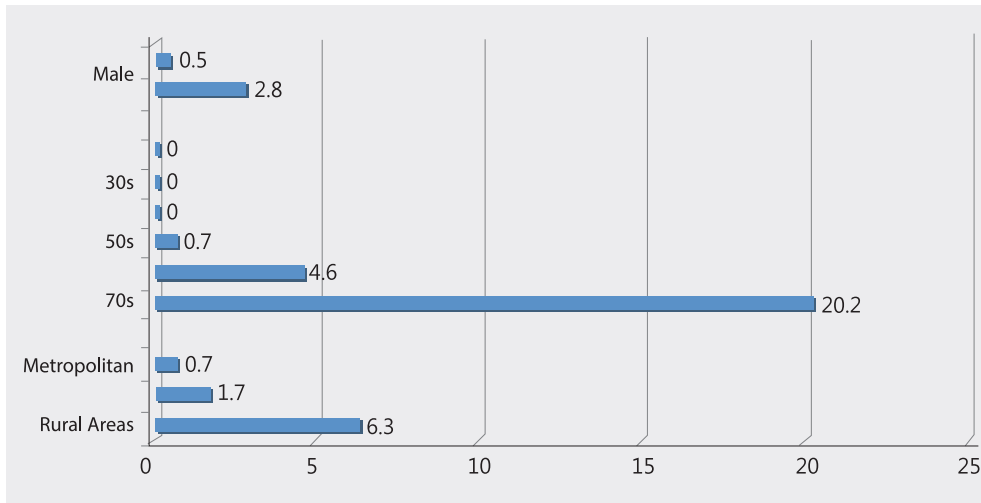
The fourth goal of EFA is to increase adult literacy – particularly targeting the female population – by 50% by 2015, and to provide equal access to basic education and continuing education for all adults. Official statistics on Korean adult literacy are published by the National Institute of the Korean Language according to Article 9 of the Fundamental Law of the Korean Language. The survey was conducted in 2008 among adults aged 19 to 79 nationwide, and the results show that 1.7% of people (about 620,000 people) turned out to be completely illiterate (i.e., no ability to read or write at all). Illiteracy according to age indicates that 0.7% among the fifties, 4.6% among the sixties and 20.2% among seventies are illiterate. Illiteracy by gender shows a gap between the male and female population with 2.7% of females illiterate whereas 0.5% of males are. The gender gap between male and female illiteracy is especially prominent among those in their seventies, constituting 28.6% of female illiteracy and only 9.1% of male illiteracy. Furthermore, rural area's illiteracy rate is 6.3%, which is higher than that of metropolitan cities (0.7%) and small to medium-sized cities (1.7%).

However, when the range of illiterates is broadened to those considered as half-literate (i.e., those who can read the alphabet and a limited number of words but have little comprehension ability), the percentage of half literates is 5.3% of people (approximately 1.98 million people). About 2.6 million people – 7% of the whole population – had problems in managing daily life in the year 2008 (completely illiterate 1.7% + half literate 5.3%). Given that Korea is now rapidly becoming a multicultural society with a large influx of foreigners, constituting mostly of foreign workers and marriage migrants, adult illiteracy rates are expected to increase. The influx of foreigners is shown as the Figure below.

Even though Korea already accomplished the fourth goal of increasing adult literacy, adult literacy education must continue for elder generations and multicultural groups in order to foster social integration and improve basic learning skills. Literacy education

<Figure 2.4.1> Illiteracy Rate by Gender, Age, and Geographical Location

Unit: %



Source: Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. (2008, Dec. 23). *Press release on the basic literacy survey results*. Retrieved March 14, 2013, from http://www.mcst.go.kr/web/s_notice/press/pressView.jsp?pSeq=9685. (in Korean).

<Table 2.4.1> Gender Gap Between Male and Female Illiteracy

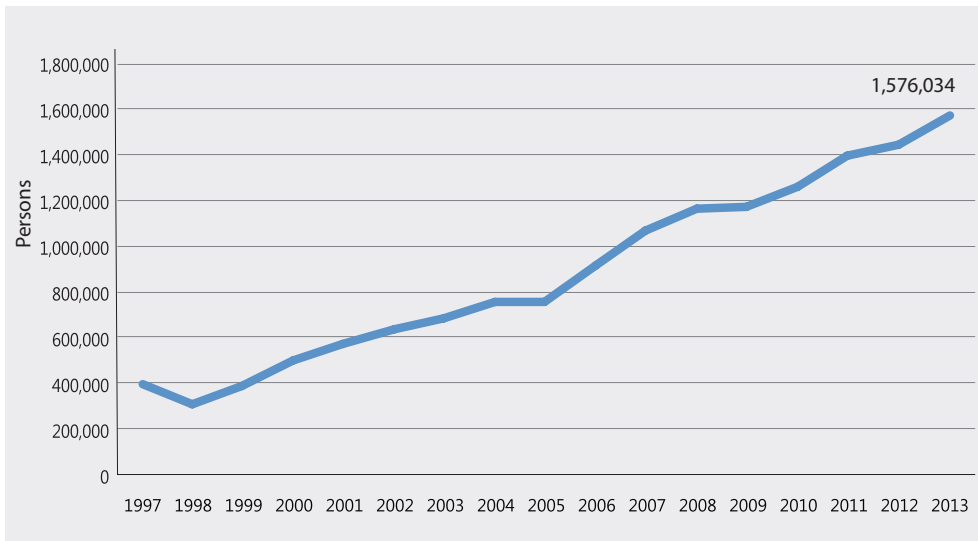
	Male Illiteracy Rate (%)	Female Illiteracy Rate (%)	Total (%)
50s	0.2	1.2	0.7
60s	0.9	7.6	4.6
70s	9.1	28.6	20.2
Total	0.5	2.8	1.7

Source: Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. (2008, Dec. 23). *Press release on the basic literacy survey results*. Retrieved March 14, 2013, from http://www.mcst.go.kr/web/s_notice/press/pressView.jsp?pSeq=9685 (in Korean).

for half-literates is especially in demand for those who need to develop their basic reading comprehension skills in order to handle ordinary practices related to everyday life.

It was in 1930 when Korean's literacy level was first surveyed through a national census conducted by Chosun Daily, the major daily newspaper in Korea. According to this national census, the illiteracy rate of the whole population was recorded at 77.7%. After the declaration of independence of Korea in 1945, no further official survey was con-

<Figure 2.4.2> The Number of Foreigners in ROK



Source: Korea Immigration Service (2013). *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*.

ducted regarding the illiteracy rate, and the exact figure is unknown due to mixed or contradicting results from different survey agencies. However, the illiteracy rate right after independence is estimated to have been roughly 77-80%, and by 1948 when the Korean government was formed, the illiteracy rate plummeted to 42%. It seems that the Korean Language Dissemination Project coordinated by the Committee for Adult Education under the Ministry of Education during the period of government control by the US military following Korean independence influenced the steep reduction of national illiteracy.

Combining the results from various reports of different investigative agencies would suggest that Korea's national illiteracy rate in the 1960s was actually around 22-28%, and according to the figure that was published by the Ministry of Education in 1968, the illiteracy rate was 14.7%. This great increase in national literacy was mostly due to the five-year National Illiteracy Eradication Campaign driven by the state. After official announcement in 1968, no further survey on illiteracy was conducted at the national level, and literacy education was largely done by private organizations and civic support groups.

However, as UNESCO proclaimed the year 1990 to be the International Literacy Year and the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) released a figure for adult illiteracy as 9.1%, social recognition and awareness on adult literacy were raised, and non-profit organizations that focus on literacy education started growing in numbers.

In 1992, the Korean Association of Literacy Education was formed, and in 1999, the National Council for Basic Adult Literacy Education joined the fray, activating literacy education mainly from the private sector.

According to the illiteracy rate surveyed by KEDI in 2002, 8.4% of the adult population possessed a basic level of literacy comparable to that of a sixth-grade elementary school student. With the enactment of the wholly amended Lifelong Education Act in 1998, literacy education was also being dealt with from the public sector side as part of the lifelong education project, and the Adult Literacy Education Support Initiative was launched in 2006.

Tracking such progress, clearly Korea's illiteracy rate has been steadily declining since the initial report on national illiteracy in 1930. In addition, literacy education started from the private sector and moved towards a state-centered program in the 1950s, and the non-profit sector significantly expanded in the 1960s. Since the early 2000s, both private and public sectors have been collaborating on literacy education.

2.4.2. Review of Policies and Strategies

State-Driven Policies and Programmes to Increase Literacy

The implications of the data suggested above show that Korea's illiteracy rate sharply reduced to around 20% in the 1960s in contrast to the high illiteracy rate that stood at around 80% in 1945. This was possible because the state forged ahead with its five-year National Illiteracy Eradication Campaign and strong will. The results indicate that the program was successfully implemented. Moreover, the six-year compulsory education plan, which established the foundation for public education, may also have contributed to reducing illiteracy. Establishment of a citizenship training school also made many contributions to the decrease in adult illiteracy by providing basic education and civic social education for people who had not received primary education and for general adults. The National Illiteracy Eradication Campaign was carried out in accordance with the operation of the adult course in the citizenship training school.

The government implemented an education program in each local district and practiced 70 to 90 days of education during the busy farming season. Various associated government ministries participated in this campaign throughout the country. The Ministry of Education set up a basic plan for the project, and the Ministry of National Defense, the Bureau of Public Information, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Health and Welfare encouraged and enlightened parents to send their children to schools. The unique strategy of this

campaign was identified as the full mobilization of current administrative systems that was made possible by the cooperation of the Ministry of Home Affairs. In metropolitan cities at city and provincial levels, a special metropolitan city mayor and provincial governors directed the whole campaign, and the director-general of the education division or the director-general of the culture, education, and society division supervised the actual practices under the command of the head of metropolitan city mayors and governors. The city marshals under the chief of the police office, and mayors and governors of the county under the home secretary took charge in this project, and advertisements via broadcasting stations contributed to increasing social recognition about the campaign.

Because there was no professional workforce to lead the campaign, every citizen who could play his or her role as a teacher was fully mobilized, including faculties and students from schools, public offices, and citizens who had the capacity to teach.

Growing Participation of NGOs

After the six-year compulsory education plan and the five-year National Illiteracy Eradication Campaign led by the state were successfully finished with remarkable achievement in the 1950s, literacy education was activated more so from the private sector than from the public sector. Private academies, regional organizations for campaigns, and community welfare centres began operating literacy education. The government also continued to strive for the improvement of the literacy rate among citizens of agricultural and fishing village areas, and promoted the reading campaign by leading a village library project.

The International Literacy Year in 1990 proclaimed by UNESCO drew attention to the Korean population in respect of adult literacy education, and as KEDI announced the adult illiteracy rate at 9.1%, people started to recognize the necessity of literacy education. In 1992, the Korean Association of Literacy Education and, in 1999, Korean Literacy and Adult Basic Education Association were formed, thereby activating community-centered literacy education. Private organizations and institutions for literacy education also increased.

Support Project for Adult Literacy Education

With the amendment of the Lifelong Education Act in 1998 and the settlement of a system for lifelong education policy, the adult literacy education project started consolidation of its foundation. The Adult Literacy Education Support Initiative started in 2006. But since 2001, the Lifelong Learning Supportive Program for Marginalized Groups of a Society had been conducted, and it enabled adults from low-educated, low-income,

and multicultural backgrounds to access opportunities for lifelong education.

The Ministry of Education embarked on the adult literacy education support initiative in 2006, which provides a second avenue of educational opportunities to illiterate and low-educated adults. This project was assisted with financial funding for the hiring of instructors and purchasing textbooks by governmental and non-profit organizations that offer adult literacy education programmes. The organizations can get funding by submitting project applications to an elementary local self-government. The major enforcement system includes the Ministry of Education, National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE), local governments and literacy education institutions. The Ministry of Education establishes the basic plans and monitors the progress of the project. The National Institute for Lifelong Education pushes forward the plans in detail and supports project operations. NILE was founded in accordance with the amendment of the Lifelong Education Act in 2008, but it used to be the National Center for Lifelong Education under KEDI prior to its foundation. Local governments put together different operational plans and applications from diverse organizations and submit a synthesized proposal to NILE. They also monitor and supervise literacy educational organizations.

The Adult Literacy Education Support Initiative for adult literacy education cultivates regional hub organizations to bolster literacy education as an exemplar so it can build infrastructure to further literacy education. With the Amended Lifelong Education Act in 2007 that included several articles on literacy education, it became possible to earn a certificate of completion from elementary and middle school, which is compulsory education, by participating in a literacy education program. Adult learners above 18 who complete a whole literacy education program designated by Metropolitan and Provincial Offices of Education can be certified with primary and secondary education after a certain evaluation. Moreover, differentiated textbooks per level and subject have been developed since 2006. In 2009, the elementary course for the literacy comprehension education program curriculum was officially announced, and the secondary course was also publicly announced by 2012. Furthermore, the faculty that is responsible for this program must finish the literacy education teachers training course operated by NILE or Metropolitan and Provincial Offices of Education. To train professional teachers in literacy education, there are basic courses as well as intensive courses.

For the sake of raising public awareness about the necessity for literacy education and to encourage learners' academic achievements and motivation, the Adult Literacy Education Support Initiative support project for adult literacy education holds national literacy education essay contests and showcased the National Exhibition of Illustrated poems in 2012 and 2013. Through these activities, the project contributes to the dissemination of the importance of literacy and urges participation in literacy education.

2.4.3. Need for Future Development

While literacy education in Korea was pushed ahead by the state in the beginning, the government's role became more supportive as private organizations started to play their pivotal role in the field. Rapid and sharp increases in the literacy rate in the 1950s were made possible because of the full mobilization of administrative power and state-centered programmes and of the law that endorsed official support for adult literacy education at the level of compulsory education. To date, continuing support projects for adult literacy education had their legal basis grounded on the Lifelong Education Act, and these projects are producing meaningful outcomes because they are directed and supervised by the National Institute for Lifelong Education, a national-level organization.

Moreover, along with the construction of infrastructure for literacy education, there was systematic support for software and human resources. During the National Reconstruction period, the Korean government prioritized developing and disseminating textbooks for adults in literacy education. Furthermore, in order to make up for the shortage of literacy education teachers, high school students and university students were mobilized and trained as teachers. Additionally, the Adult Literacy Education Support Initiative that started in 2006 not only provides financial aid but also supports developing textbooks and training of teachers for literacy education.

Notwithstanding the importance of governmental support, vigorous participation of the private sector is also crucial. In Korea, NGOs and non-profit organizations with a variety of experiences and expertise have been participating in the support project as partners. The result of literacy education can be fruitful when the government and NGOs collaborate closely. The accomplishment in literacy education in Korea is attributed to steady support from the government and the dedication of NGOs combined.

As the influx of foreign workers and marriage migrants increase, this population is now a new target for literacy education in Korea. It is necessary to develop and expand adequate programmes specifically oriented towards them. Furthermore, because not all cities and provinces offer services that certify the level of elementary and middle school education for learners of literacy education, the service system must be shared to all learners studying in other regions as well. In order to actualize this share-system, the network among NILE and Metropolitan and Provincial Offices of Education, as well as literacy education fields, should be strengthened.

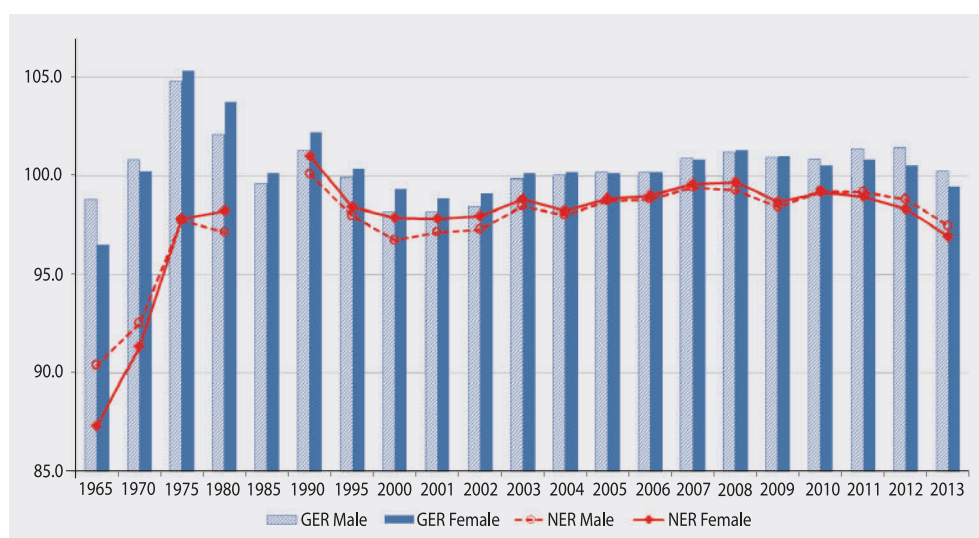
2.5. Achieving Gender Parity and Equality

2.5.1. Tracking Progress

In this section, gender parity and equity in education and the progress up to date will be evaluated by looking at the participation ratio by gender in primary, secondary, and higher education.

Korea achieved gender equality in school enrolment rates around 1975. Looking at Korea's elementary school enrolment ratio by gender from 1965 to the present day, the 1960s and early 1970s indicate higher male populations both in GER and NER; however, in 1975, female GER surpassed male GER, and NER equalized. Enrolment ratios per se were quite high by the 1970s more generally, exceeding over 97% for both genders. Even though the NER for 1985 is unknown due to lacking data, the female enrolment ratio was higher than the male enrolment ratio from 1975 to 2009. The male enrolment ratio has, however, maintained a higher percentage than that of the female enrolment ratio since 2010, yet the difference is less than 1% (see Annex 1).

<Figure 2.5.1> Korea's Elementary School Enrolment Ratio by Gender

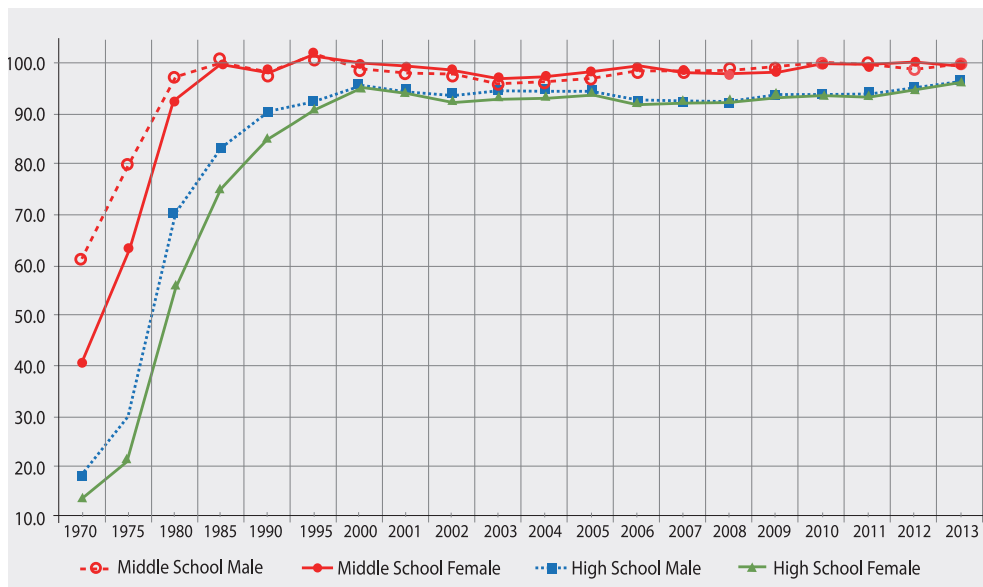


Notes: NER calculation of elementary school students per age in 1985 is unknown due to the absence of statistical data.; There are some cases that NER exceeds 100% because early entrance students (0-5 year) were included until 1995.; Population census in Korea is conducted every 5 year, therefore the exact population is confirmed only until 2010. There are possibilities of change in population calculated after 2011.

Source: Ministry of Education. (2013). *Statistical Yearbook of Education*. Ministry of Education & Korean Education Development Institute. Retrieved from <http://kess.kedi.re.kr/index>
 Statistics Korea. (2012). *Population Projection for Korea*. Retrieved from http://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1B01001&conn_path=I2

Gender equality in middle school enrolment rates was achieved in the mid-1980s. In 1970, Korea's male GER was 20 percentage points higher than that of females. However, 15 years later in 1985, the gender gap in GER reduced to less than 1%. Also, in 1990, female GER surpassed male GER for the first time. Not only was gender disparity diminished but GER per se also significantly increased so that female GER grew by 60 percentage points over a period of 15 years. Meanwhile, male students steadily marked a higher GER than female students in high school. It was not until 1995 when the female GER reached 90% that female GER reached a similar level to male GER. The trend in NER by gender shows little difference from GER (see Annex 2 & 3).

<Figure 2.5.2> Korea's Middle and High School Enrolment Ratio by Gender (GER)



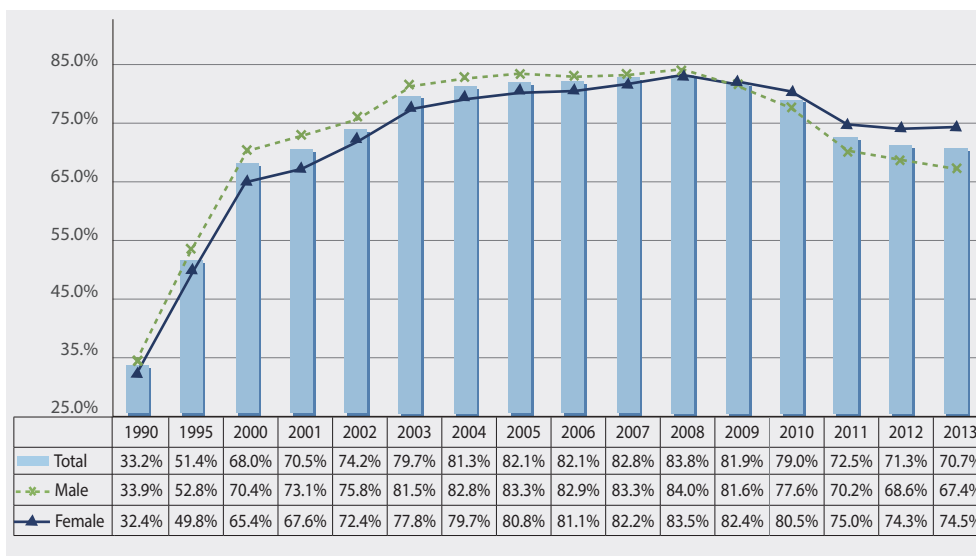
Note: Population census in Korea is conducted every 5 year, therefore the exact population is confirmed only until 2010. There are possibilities of change in population calculated after 2011.

Source: Ministry of Education. (2013). *Statistical Yearbook of Education*. Ministry of Education & Korean Education Development Institute. Retrieved from <http://kess.kedi.re.kr/index>
 Statistics Korea. (2012). *Population Projection for Korea*. Retrieved from http://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1B01001&conn_path=I2

Since the year 2000, it was in the field of higher education where gender equality in education has been greatly realized. The graph below displays the college entrance rates of the high school graduates. Korea's college entrance rates for both genders were below 40% until 1990, yet in 2005, the rates of both genders exceeded 80%. This means that the college entrance rate in Korea has more than doubled in 15 years. The male entrance

rates for higher education had always kept ahead of the female rates until 2008; however, female students started to exceed male students after 2009, and the gender gap continues to increase. Nevertheless, this recent phenomenon must be carefully interpreted because it is related to the change in data collection methods on the advancement rates into college among high school graduates.¹

<Figure 2.5.3> Korea's Advancement Rate (High → Tertiary)



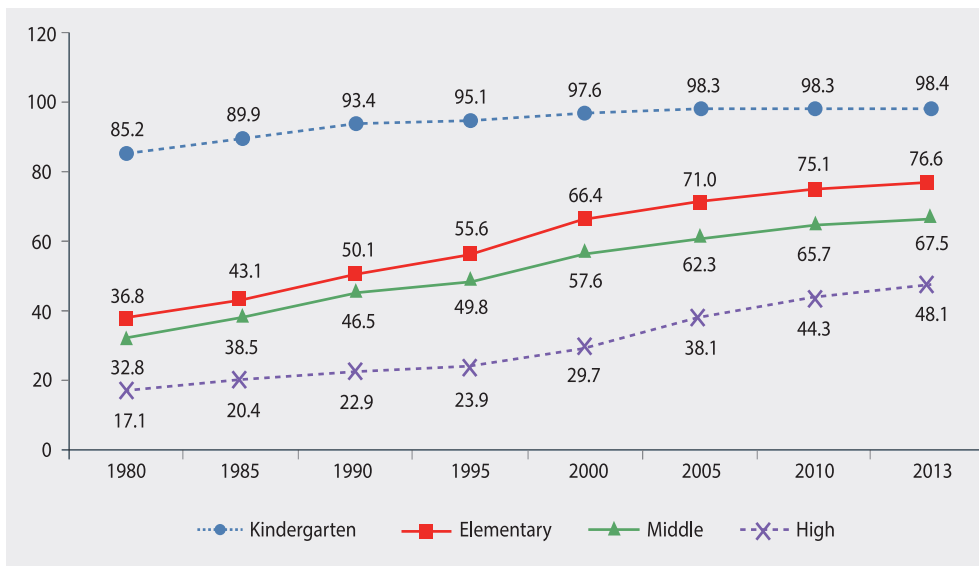
Note: Advancement Rate = (Higher Education Entrants among High School Graduates / High School Graduates) x 100

The percentage of female teachers in Korea in primary and secondary education has doubled over the last 30 years. Traditionally, kindergarten teachers were regarded as a woman's career while primarily and secondary school teachers were regarded as a man's career. More recently, the perception of primary and secondary school teachers

1. Until 2010, the number of university students corresponded exactly to the number of students admitted; however, since 2011, the number of students enrolled in university has been counted separately to account for various discrepancies. Students who choose to defer enrolment to university in order to get admission from a better school despite gaining admission from other schools are now excluded from the number of students enrolled. In Korea, approximately 20% of the applicants of the annual College Scholastic Ability Test represent these repeaters, and to repeat the test, a substantial amount of financial aid is needed; thus, it is likely that gender inequality may exist within the repetition process of CSAT. Therefore, the recent increase in female college entrants may not be attributable to more female students entering college than male students, but due to more male students choosing to repeat CSAT in order to get into higher ranked universities. In fact, the percentage of female college enrolment after graduation from high school is higher than that of male enrolment; nevertheless, 60% of enrolled students in higher education comprise male students.

changed in perception as also career paths for women. By 2013, the percentage of female teachers in elementary school peaked to 76.6%, three times higher than that of male teachers. Scarcity of male teachers in elementary school is a notable issue today. However, it is important to pay attention to the fact that the percentage of female teachers explicitly diminishes as higher levels of education. The percentage of female educators evidently decreases by the level of education from elementary school to high school, and this percentage plunges when it comes to higher education. The percentage of female professors and related policies will be largely discussed in the following section (2.5.2).

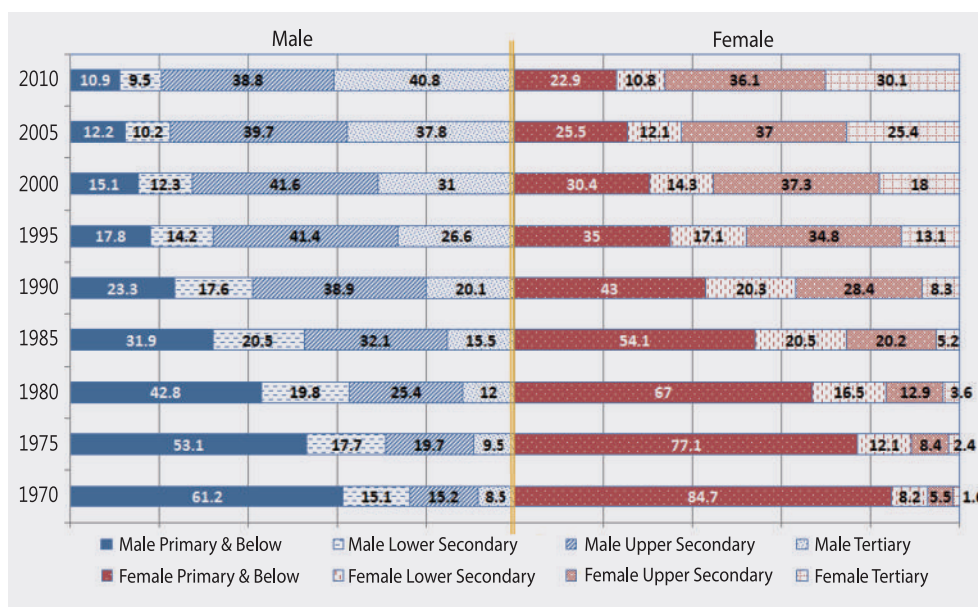
<Figure 2.5.4> Korea's Female Teacher Ratio



Source: Ministry of Education. (2013). *Statistical Yearbook of Education*. Ministry of Education & Korean Education Development Institute. Retrieved from <http://kess.kedi.re.kr/index>

Government investment and citizen participation in education lifted adults' education levels for both genders. The graph above chronologically demonstrates the distribution of adults' (25+) education levels. Since 1970, the percentage of women with only primary or lower levels of education has reduced by 61.8 percentage points while the percentage of men has reduced by 50.3 percentage points. While the rate for adults' education levels for women improved at a faster rate than for men, men's education levels are higher overall. In 2010, women who have only primary or lower levels of education were twice more than that of men, and women with higher education marked 10 percentage points lower than that of men. Such a gender discrepancy is a leftover symptom of much greater male enrolment rates during previous decades rather than reflective of current gender discrepancy.

<Figure 2.5.5> Korea's Adults' Education Levels



Source: Statistics Korea. (2007). *Korea Population and Housing Census*. Retrieved from http://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1IN5503&conn_path=I2

2.5.2. Review of Policies and Strategies

Although Korea has already accomplished relative gender parity in educational participation, several conscious efforts were made to achieve qualitative gender parity and equality in school curriculum and learning environments. For this purpose, the Korean government endeavored to prepare legal and political support to solve gender inequality in education since the late 1980s.

Legal Basis for Gender Parity and Equality in Education

Korea advocates gender parity and equality in education by law. The Act on Education enacted in 1997 states the Promotion of Equal Education of Males and Females (Article 17-2) and Cultivation of Healthy Gender Consciousness (Article 17-4) so that the national and regional self-governments can set up policies to realize gender parity while protecting students' dignity while offering education programmes and facilities customized for each gender. Furthermore, in 1995, the Framework Act on Women's Development was legislated to imbue the idea of gender equality in school education as well as lifelong education, and to ensure equal educational opportunities for female learners.

Middle and Long-Term Goals in Policymaking

Korea has prepared and proceeded with a strategy to accomplish gender equality in education through several middle and long-term plans. These plans are established every five years by annually evaluating citizens' levels of achievement by gender.

The government's will on achieving gender equality in education was first reflected in the 6th Five-year Economic and Social Development Plan from 1987 to 1991. Female development was set as a separate policy sector via this plan, and the equalization of school education was adopted as a particular objective. An integrated curriculum of technology and home economics was newly created, thus addressing the problem with the existing curriculum that separated home economics (for female students) and technology (for male students) based on gender. Furthermore, monitoring of textbooks from a gender perspective was initiated in order to overcome gender bias. Avoidance of gender bias was formally stated in curriculum guidance by the 7th Five-year Economic and Social Development Plan from 1992 to 1996, and the number of female students entering technical high schools increased despite the traditionally male dominant environment of such schools.

After the Economic and Social Development Plan finished, policies regarding gender equality have been conducted via the 1st Basic Plan for Women's Policies (1998-2002). Attempts to train female human resources in fields that had traditionally been male dominant were regularized during that period. Women were allowed admission to the Korea Military Academy, mathematics and science programmes geared towards women were developed, and scholarships were provided to women studying natural sciences and engineering to promote their careers in such fields.

The 2nd Basic Plan for Women's Policies (2003-2007) focused on enlarging the scale of gender equality education based on the 1st Basic Plan for Women's Policies. Weighty policies, some of which are still conducted today, were implemented. After employment opportunities had expanded for female teachers at the primary and secondary education levels, the government focused on expanding the proportion of female professors in higher education through the Academic Affirmative Action Plan for Women in Public University. Also, the Public Education Official Act was amended in order not to be weighted in favor of men when hiring professors. Each university is obliged to establish and report its own plans on hiring female professors every three years. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education has begun to offer administrative and financial incentives to each university based on the proportion of women hired. Another main achievement for the given period is government support for training of female scientists and technicians. The government legislated in 2003 to train female technicians at the national level. Institutions for WISET (Women in Science, Engineering & Technology)

were designated in a number of regions; also, mentoring programmes for female undergraduate students majoring in science and engineering, research activity support for female scientists and engineers, and strategies for supporting female returnees were devised and implemented. Additionally, in 2003, the Career Development Center for Women Students was organized and established in some universities to foster women's potential and to support their career activities.

The 3rd Basic Plan for Women's Policies (2008-2012) mostly focused on continuing the fundamentals of the 2nd Basic Plan for Women's Policies. The 4th Basic Plan for Women's Policies (2013-2017), however, has broadened the range of the policies to secure women's rights and safety by laying the groundwork for school environments to be free of sexual harassment and sexual violence, strengthening educational support systems for single mothers and their children, developing physical education programmes for female students, and establishing nursery facilities within universities.

2.5.3. Need for Further Development

Even though Korea has accomplished gender equality in terms of accessibility to elementary and secondary education and has established policies and laws that further gender equality in education, the gender gap has not been narrowed in all fields.

Diversification of majors for female undergraduate students is an important issue since it is directly connected to their careers. However, gender segregation is still strict in the higher education field. Despite efforts to foster female resources in science and technology since 2004, the percentage of female students in such fields decreased by 7.1 percentage points within universities and 11.6 percentage points within colleges over the past decade. Meanwhile, the percentage of female students increased by more than 4 percentage points both within colleges and universities in social sciences, business, and law majors. In addition, the percentage of female students in the education field in colleges runs 94.9% (2010), indicating that gender inequality among majors is still a major issue that needs to be addressed (see Annex 4).

Furthermore, even though the percentage has rapidly increased for elementary and secondary female teachers, there exists a problem that the percentage of female managerial positions in education does not correspond to that of female teachers. The percentage of female principals in elementary schools in 2013 was just 18.6% while that of female teachers were 76.6%. This imbalance is not much different in middle and high schools. In middle schools, the percentage of female principals is 20.0% while the percentage of female teachers is 67.5%; in high schools, the percentage of female principals is 8.7% while the percentage of female teachers is 48.1%. Indeed, the gap between female teach-

ers and principals is quite big (see Annex 5).

Additionally, the percentage of female professors is increasing annually thanks to policy measures introduced in 2004, but the rate of increase is very slow. Currently, female professors make up 23.1% of the entire professoriate and only 14.2% of the professoriate within national universities. Meanwhile, female students make up 42.4% of all university students and 44.4% of students within national universities.

Korea has put in a great deal of effort into and legislated a wide range of policies and laws to ease the gender imbalance based on the Dakar Framework for Action, and that led to the accomplishment of gender equality at a significant level from elementary to higher education. Although there still exist a number of fields that need to be improved regarding female participation, the government is producing major efforts to ease gender inequality through various policy endeavors.

<Table 2.5.1> Percentage of Female Professors and Female Students

		2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
All	Female Professor	17.2	18.1	18.8	19.3	19.8	20.4	21.2	21.7	22.5	23.1
	Female Student	39.1	39.4	39.9	40.4	40.9	41.3	41.8	42.1	42.2	42.4
National/ State University	Female Professor	10.7	11.5	11.9	12.2	12.4	12.8	13.3	13.5	13.8	14.2
	Female Student	43.8	43.8	43.6	43.7	43.7	44.0	44.5	44.4	44.4	44.4
Private University	Female Professor	19.3	20.2	21.0	21.4	22.0	22.6	23.5	24.2	25.1	25.7
	Female Student	37.5	37.9	38.6	39.2	39.9	40.4	41.0	41.3	41.5	41.8

Note: Higher education includes undergraduate and graduate schools.

Source: Ministry of Education. (2013). *Statistical Yearbook of Education*. Ministry of Education & Korean Education Development Institute. Retrieved from <http://kess.kedi.re.kr/index>

2.6. Improving the Quality of Education

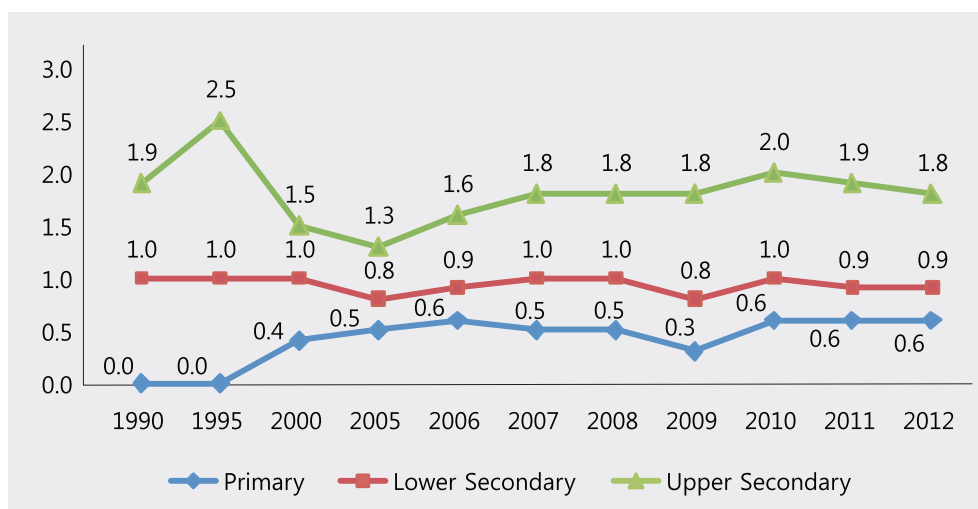
2.6.1. Tracking Progress

The ultimate goal of EFA is to improve all aspects of the quality of education and to ensure excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all.

Enthusiasm and hard work on education have led the rapid progress of Korea over the last six decades to produce high-quality human resources. Especially to improve all aspects of the quality of education, Korea has concentrated on revising and implementing the national curriculum, improving the educational environment, enhancing teachers' professional development, reforming teaching and learning methods and monitoring the quality of education.

Although partly covered in chapter 2.2, the enrolment rate, drop-out rate, and transition rate in ROK schools in this section are used in the measurement of education quality. Korea reached universal education at primary and secondary levels. The net enrolment rate in primary school was 97.7% in 1980 and 97.2% in 2013. The dropout rate at primary and secondary schools has been consistently low as shown in Figure 2.6.1. Since Korea has six years of primary education, the survival rate to grade 6 has been consistently high at 99.7% in 2005 and 98.6% in 2013. In addition, 100% of primary school graduates have gone on to lower secondary schools since 2000, and more than 70% of upper secondary school graduates go on to further education (more than 80% from 2005 to 2010) in Korea.

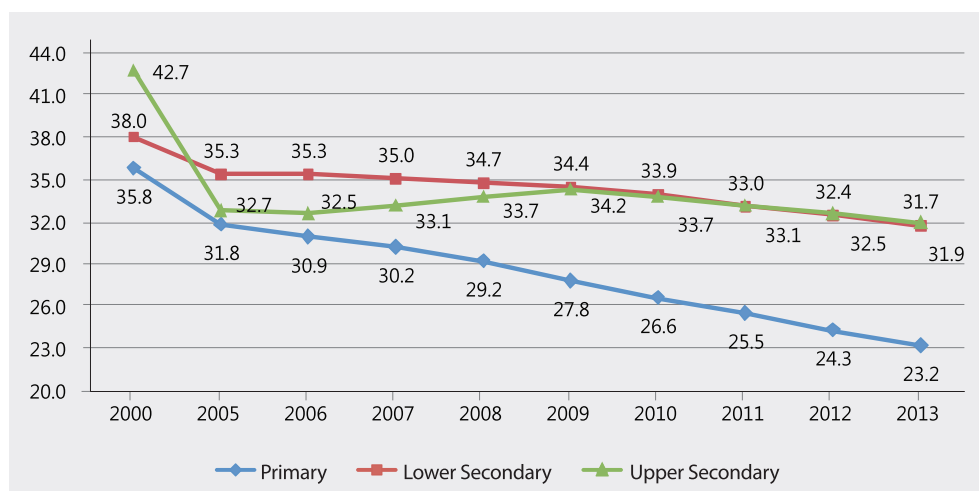
<Figure 2.6.1> Dropout Rate at Primary and Secondary Schools



Source: KEDI. (2013). *An analysis of educational statistics: Early Childhood, primary and secondary school level*.

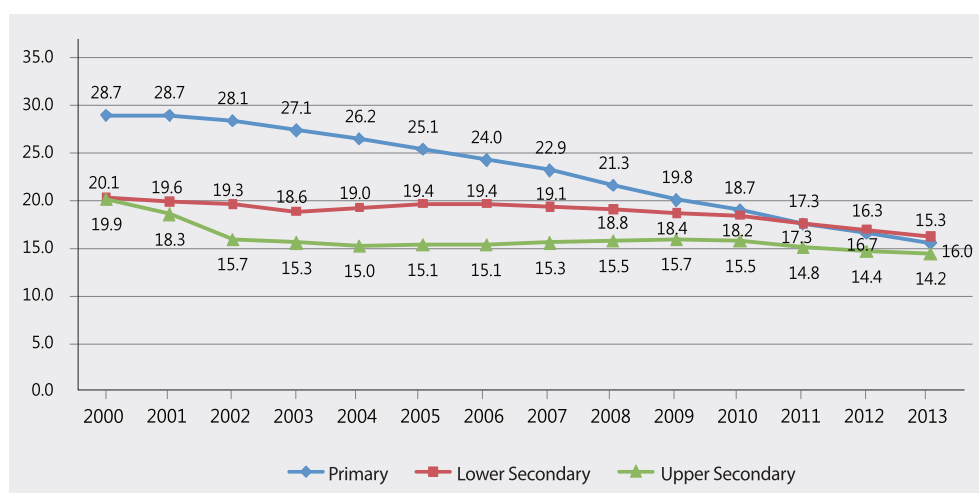
Class size and student-teacher ratio are also important indicators of education quality. In Korea, rapid population growth and increasing demand for education led to overcrowded schools and classrooms in the 1970s and 1980s, and in response, the government strived to improve the educational environment towards qualitative improvements of education by increasing the number of teachers and financing the expansion and modernization of schools. The number of pupils in class and the student-teacher ratios at primary and secondary schools have been decreasing as indicated in Figure 2.6.2 and 2.6.3, respectively.

<Figure 2.6.2> Number of Pupils in Class at Primary and Secondary Schools



Source: KEDI. (2013). *An analysis of educational statistics: Early Childhood, primary and secondary school level.*

<Figure 2.6.3> Student-Teacher Ratios at Primary and Secondary School



Source: KEDI. (2013). *An analysis of educational statistics: Early Childhood, primary and secondary school level.*

Furthermore, Korean students' outstanding academic achievement is well known. In international comparative studies of students' academic achievement, such as the Programme for International Student Achievement (PISA) and Trends in Mathematics and Sciences Study (TIMSS), Korean students have performed well every time. In the case of PISA, which assesses the competence of 15-year-olds, Korea has been reported as one of the highest performing OECD countries in the subjects of science, reading and mathematics since the first cycle, PISA 2000, as shown in Table 2.6.1.

<Table 2.6.1> Trends of Korean Students' Achievements in PISA

PISA Cycle	No. of Participating Countries	Reading		Mathematics		Science	
		Rank	Average Score	Rank	Average Score	Rank	Average Score
2000	43	7	525	3	547	1	552
2003	41	2	534	3	542	4	538
2006	57	1	556	1~4	547	7~13	522
2009	65	2~4	539	3~6	546	4~7	538
2012	65	3~5	536	3~5	536	5~8	538

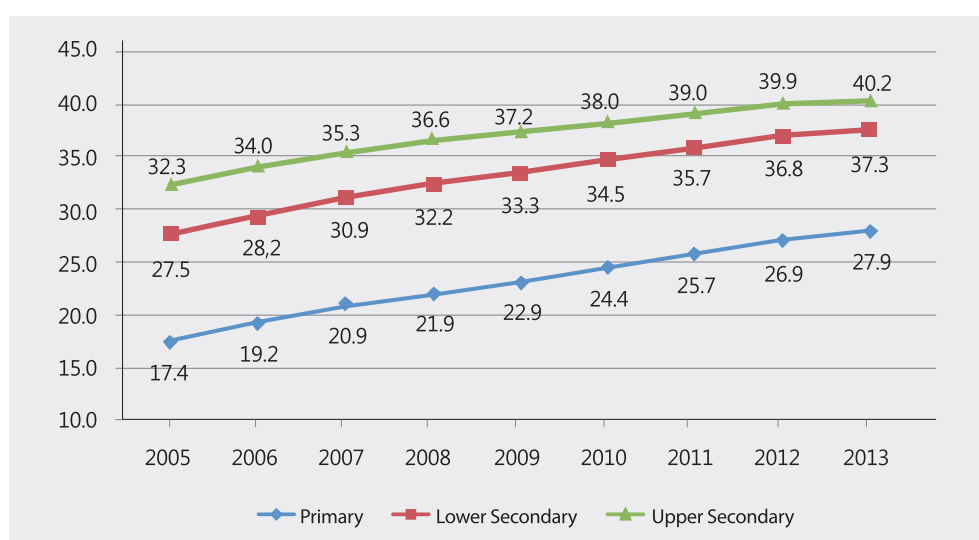
TIMSS measures trends in mathematics and science achievements for fourth and eighth graders, and Korea has been participating in TIMSS since the first cycle for eighth graders, but only in 1995 and 2011 for fourth graders. The results also indicate the high performance of Korean students as shown in Table 2.6.2.

<Table 2.6.2> Trends of Korean Students' Achievements in TIMSS

TIMSS Cycle	No. of Participating Countries	Mathematics		Science	
		Rank	Average Score	Rank	Average Score
1995	45	3	581	4	546
1999	38	2	587	5	549
2003	48	2	589	3	558
2007	50	2	597	4	553
2011	42	1	613	3	560

Improvements in the quality of education require well-trained and qualified teachers. One of the reasons for Korea's remarkable learning outcomes is that students have more qualified and experienced teachers. The average age and educational background of teachers can be counted in terms of quality since the professional development of teachers is not achieved in the short term. The average age of teachers in Korea has been rising and is currently at 39.8, 42.1 and 42.6 years old at the primary, lower and upper secondary levels, respectively. In terms of educational background, most primary and secondary school teachers have bachelor's degrees or higher. However, the proportion of teachers who have attained master's degrees or higher has increased as shown in Figure 2.6.4.

<Figure 2.6.4> Percentage of Teachers Having Obtained Master's Degrees or Higher



Source: KEDI. (2013). *An analysis of educational statistics: Early Childhood, primary and secondary school level*.

Likewise, educational levels of teachers are more likely to improve as the quality levels of a school increase. Since 1990, teachers have been recruited consistently through an open-selection process, and various educational policies for the professional development of teachers have been undertaken. Since 1992, the national-level teacher employment test has been conducted, and various training programmes from more than 140 teacher training organizations, such as metropolitan/provincial education training institutes, online educational training institutes, training institutes associated with universities of education, etc., have been provided for in-service teachers every year. In-service training programmes offer qualification training, certificates, professional job training and other types of training. According to the course, training is divided into attendance training and distance training.

2.6.2. Review of Policies and Strategies

After the educational reform of 1995 was proposed and the financial crisis of 1997, in 2002, the Korean government reformed the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development. The combined efforts of both educational and human-resource development would contribute to the development of the country by cultivating the necessary manpower by offering high-quality education. Especially considering the minimum essentials offered by the EFA Goals for Quality Primary Education, the Korean government has placed an emphasis on designing and implementing its national curriculum and providing appropriate teaching and learning materials.

Transition of the National Curriculum

In Korea, the national curriculum has gone through nine major revisions in consideration of societal changes and student developments ever since the government was established in 1948. Since the national curriculum provides the general standards of what Korean students are supposed to know and be able to do, various agencies and organizations led by the Ministry of Education have worked together in the complicated process of curriculum revisions, resulting in heightened quality of the national curriculum. The main characteristics and directions of the current 2009 revised curriculum are to cultivate both creativity and character and to design a common curriculum from the 1st grade to 9th grade as well as an elective curriculum for upper secondary school students, among other efforts.

In particular, the 6th Curriculum proposed that the management of educational quality needed to be strengthened, and the evaluation system for this was established in the 7th Curriculum (KICE, 2012). Based on the national curriculum, the assessment of student learning outcomes is intended as an educational activity to ensure that all students successfully attain the objectives of education as a means of monitoring the quality of education in Korea.

Monitoring the Quality of Education

Countries around the world have conducted various national and international-level assessments of learning outcomes in order to enhance the quality of education. Korea has also conducted the annual College Scholastic Ability Test (hereafter referred to as CSAT) for upper secondary school students and National Assessment of Educational Achievement (hereafter referred to as NAEA) for primary and secondary students at the national level. As many countries have connected the results of assessing learning outcomes with policy efforts to improve the quality of education crucial for national

prosperity in a global society, an effective evaluation system in education has played an imperative role in Korea.

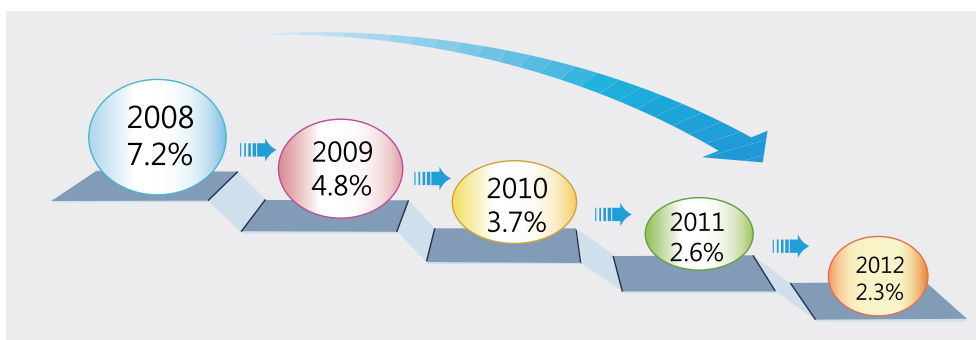
- **National Assessment of Educational Achievement (NAEA)**

NAEA has been carried out since the year 2000 in order to measure the educational achievements of students in primary and secondary education along with systematic and scientific trends of such achievements in Korea. NAEA has placed an emphasis on establishing a system to support the improvement of basic academic abilities and school accountability system in recent years. In addition, NAEA provides the data and information for enhancement of curriculum and teaching-learning strategies. Prior to 2008, only 3% to 5% of sampled students participated in NAEA. From the year 2008, however, NAEA has been extended to evaluate the student population targeting grades six, nine, and eleven. One of the reasons for the change of NAEA from sample-based test to census test is to ensure each student's basic academic skills by supplementing remedial learning for students with low-performance and to strengthen the schools' accountability systems.

According to the results of academic achievement assessment since 2008, the percentage of proficient and advanced levels has increased in comparison with the below-basic level that has been consistently low as shown in Figure 2.6.5 (MEST, 2012). Schools with a certain percentage of students who belong to this below-average of the basic level are identified as low-performing schools and can get extra support through the School for Improvement (SFI) programme.

Furthermore, the overall achievement gap between urban and rural areas has been reduced. Achievement assessment results and individual results are provided in detail, and the

<Figure 2.6.5> Percentage of Students Belong to Below-basic Level at Grades 6, 9 and 11



Source: Ministry of Education. (2012). *A press release on the results of 2012 National Assessment of Educational Achievement*.

school's overall achievement results are publicly announced via school websites to the public. Thus, schools are obligated to conduct achievement assessments and publicize them.

- **The College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT)**

Students who want to enter a college after they graduate from upper secondary school have to take the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT) in mid-November since 1994. CSAT is a national university entrance exam that centers on assessing students' learning abilities required for college education and higher-order thinking skills. The exam has gone through various changes in the aspect of assessment system and implementation. More than a half-million students take this test every year that consists of multiple-choice items in subject areas such as Korean Language, Mathematics, English, Social Studies, Science, and others. The framework, including the number of test items and the scoring report, regularly changes to reflect revisions in the national curriculum. As many upper secondary school students aim to enter a top-ranked university, this is one of the most important tests in Korea. Therefore, the CSAT has a substantial impact on what students learn in upper secondary schools.

- **International Comparative Studies of Student Assessment**

As mentioned earlier in this section, Korea has also participated in international achievement studies, such as PISA and TIMSS, since their inception in assessing the quality of education. The results of those assessments have provided internationally comparable data of competencies and great implications for the improvement of curriculum and educational policies to the participating countries, including the Republic of Korea.

2.6.3. Need for Further Improvement

The revised national curriculum of 2009 emphasized the cultivation of creativity and good character for the benefit of global society by teaching various subjects and expanding extra-curricular activities. Since the balanced and aligned practice of curriculum, teaching, learning and evaluation methods is very critical to enhance the quality of education and reach the aims and goals for the national curriculum as successfully intended, Korea has been continuously exploring ways to develop such aligned ties by revising the curriculum as needed, using ICT for online education services with innovative teaching and learning systems while improving the assessment system.

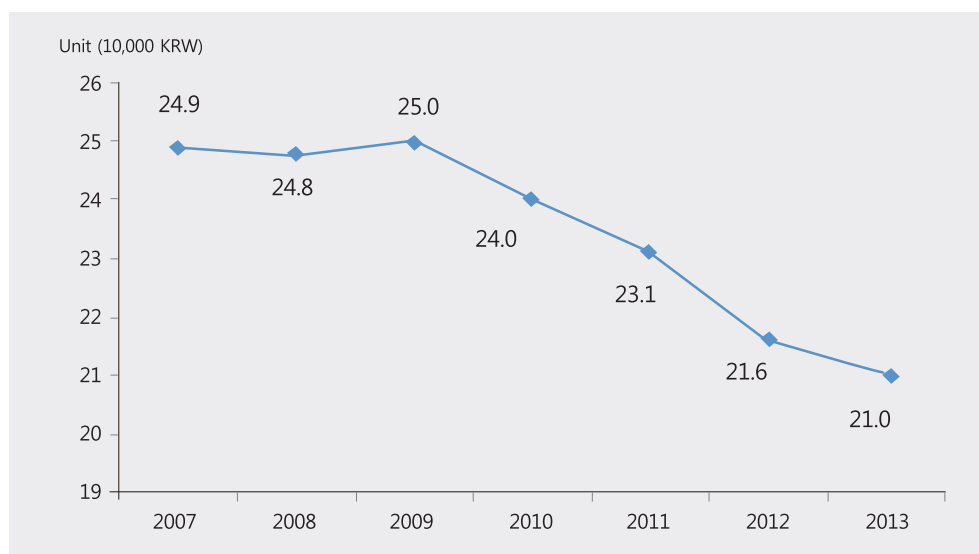
Since the Ministry of Education has continued to develop schools that are tailored to student needs to expand school autonomy and offer diverse types of high-quality schools, one of the remaining challenges is the reduction in the gap of satisfaction

with public education among schools that offer quality education in Korea. The Ministry of Education recently announced its plan for strengthening educational competency for general high schools, containing more than 70% of all students, through the revisions of curriculum and teaching-learning systems.

However, students' private education expenditure remains one of the key issues needed for reform in Korea today. Many students participate in supplementary education to be able to facilitate admission into top universities. Even though the total amount of annual expenditures on supplementary education per student, after adjusting for the inflation rate, has decreased by the various governmental efforts as shown in Figure 2.6.6, there still exists the need to reduce spending further and offer people access to good education with smaller financial burden. To enhance current college-entrance guidelines and reduce the financial burden imposed on families by private tutoring and study, the Korean government fosters a college-autonomy policy and the Admissions Officer System with expansion of after-school programmes and support for an e-learning system. In particular, the Admissions Officer System has been implemented at universities to select students by considering his or her talent desired by each university or college. The Korean government has also provided annual financial support to universities since 2008 so that this system can be established.

On the other hand, national-level assessment results are utilized in various ways. In Korea, all national-level results from 2009, including CSAT and NAEA have been made

<Figure 2.6.6> Monthly Expenditures Per Student After Adjusting for the Inflation Rate



Source: MOE. (2014). *Announcement on 2013 Supplementary Education Survey Results*.

accessible to the public through the School Information Disclosure System. This data has led to significant implications for the perspectives of educational policies since it aims to ensure the public right to know, and the evidence-driven educational policies can be established based on analysis of schools, student backgrounds and social changes to enhance the quality of education. Moreover, it provides useful information from which policy implications on achievement gaps between schools and regions can be deduced.

Korea has continuously monitored the quality of education through national and international level student assessments, and Korea puts a great deal of effort into establishing appropriate assessment and report systems in schools. In 2011, Korea launched the Plan to Improve the Secondary School Academic Affairs Management, which improves the teaching-learning practice and assessment system of secondary education.

Korean students' competencies in reading, mathematics and science have been consistently very high in accordance with other countries in international comparative studies of student assessment. The challenge in education that Korea faces, however, is that students show much lower effective achievements compared to cognitive domains. As for institutional, social and personal aspects, Korea needs to discover what students find difficult and conduct more studies to improve affective achievements related to core competencies, especially for twenty-first century awareness of improving learning endeavors. To solve this challenge, educational policy directions have become dedicated to achieving the goal of providing education for happiness that nurtures dreams and talents.

2.7. Highlights

Goal 1 *Expanding and Improving Early Childhood Care and Education*

Progress

ECCE in the Republic of Korea has made significant progress over the last 15 years. Free education and care for children at age 5 were initiated in rural areas in 1999 for the first time and has become universal since 2012. It has been extended to include all 3 and 4-year olds in 2013. Furthermore, free childcare has been provided to children ages 0 to 2 since 2012, and childrearing allowances are given to parents who do not use any ECCE services and raise their children at home. The ECCE budget per child in kindergartens has been increased 3.5 times from 2005 to 2012. The quality of ECCE services also has been improved to a considerable extent. For example, the proportion of teachers with a bachelor's degree in kindergartens have increased to over 50% in 2012, compared to 26.3% in 2001.

Strategy

Contrary to the past when ECCE was given much less attention, ECCE became a priority in the national policy agenda recently due to Korea's low birth rate and increase of working mothers as well as the recognition of the importance of early childhood development. After the introduction of various support policies such as free education and care for children in rural areas (1999), subsidies for families with more than two children (2005), childrearing allowances (2010), financial support followed. The total annual public budget of ECCE was about 12 trillion won in 2013, increasing threefold when compared to 2005. Attention to quality has increased as well. The office for childcare teachers' certification management and a consulting system to provide individually tailored advice to ECCE teachers and institutions were introduced in 2007 and 2010, respectively.

Need for Further Improvement

Due to the multi-sectoral nature of ECCE, it is important to coordinate diverse sectors such as health, nutrition, gender empowerment, labor, economy and so on. Also, more active networking and exchange between public and private services, improvement on child-teacher ratios in kindergartens and more engagement of parents are in need of further improvement.

Goal 2 | *Achieving Universal Primary and Secondary Education*

Progress

As universalization means that at least 95% of school-aged youths are enrolled in school, Korea had achieved universal primary education by the early 1960s, universal lower secondary education by the early 1980s and universal upper secondary education by the late 1990s. The Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) of primary school was 95.3% in 1960; the GER of lower secondary education was 95.1% in 1980; and the GER of upper secondary school exceeded 95.0% in 1998. Similar levels of GER continue today. In 2012, the GER of primary, middle, and high school was 98.6%, 96.1%, 92.6%, respectively.

Strategies

Access to quality basic education (nine years) is legally supported and mandated; it is guaranteed in the National Constitution and the Fundamentals of Education Act. Strong national political commitment has played a crucial role in achieving the universalization of basic education. The Six-year Compulsory Education Completion Plan, which took place from 1954 to 1959, is an example of this. Additionally, Korea has invested a large proportion of its governmental budget in education, and this was especially so at the primary education level during the early stages of universalization. The positive impact of Korean culture that cherishes education also needs to be taken into account as a factor in achieving universalization of basic education.

Need for Further Improvement

Korea's comparatively high student-teacher ratio needs to be addressed. In 2012, the average class size at the primary education level was 24.3, middle school level was 32.4 and high school level was 31.9. Also, other than merely showing high enrolment rates and high academic achievement, education needs to better foster students' creativity and enjoyment of learning.

Goal 3 | *Promoting Learning and Life Skills for Youth and Adults*

Progress

Universalization of secondary education and the systematization of lifelong education have contributed to promoting learning and life skills for youth and adults in Korea. In the 1960s and 1970s, secondary education began to expand rapidly. Moreover, in 1974, the Open Upper Secondary School was established, and an education policy was introduced that compelled industry-affiliated middle and high schools and regular middle and high schools to offer special night courses for those who missed out on formal education. Relying on the government's strong support, vocational education and training also have been greatly enhanced. After a sequence of laws related to lifelong education, the National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE) was established in 2007 to be a central government arm for planning and implementing lifelong learning policies.

Strategies

Policies promoting vocational high schools and reinforcing a vocational training system contributed to the successful industrialization of Korea in the 1970s. In turn, the demand of the labor market contributed to promoting vocational education and training. Learning opportunities provided by a diversified lifelong educational system also made it possible to achieve goal 3. Open Secondary Schools, Korea National Open University, the Academic Credit Bank System, and the Bachelor's Degree Examination for Self-Education have all made it possible for all citizens to pursue educational opportunities.

Need for Further Improvement

It is highly necessary to support lifelong education for marginalized groups of society and to improve their vocational abilities. Developing the specialties that can be linked to employment opportunities for the retired population and elder generations is also needed. To do so, learning capacity of local society should be reinforced.

Goal 4 *Reducing Adult Illiteracy by 50%*

Progress

Korea's illiteracy rate has been declining steadily since the initial report on national illiteracy announced in 1930 when the illiteracy rate was 77.7%. The illiteracy rate in 1948 was 42%, and in 1968, was 14.7%. The most recent survey on illiteracy, which was conducted in 2008, reported illiteracy at 1.7% among adults aged 19 to 79. However, the illiteracy gap between different age groups and genders was also captured. For example, while 20.2% of people in their 70s are illiterate, only 0.7% of people in their 50s are illiterate, and 0% of people between the ages 19 and 49 are illiterate. Regarding gender discrepancies, the survey found that 2.7% of women were illiterate while only 0.5% of men were.

Strategies

One success factor in reducing illiteracy was state-driven policies and programmes. For example, the Five-Year National Illiteracy Eradication Campaign in the 1950s in which the government implemented an education program in each local district in order to reduce illiteracy rate succeeded, resulting in the sharp reduction of the illiteracy rate by 1960. Moreover, the Six-Year Compulsory Education Plan established the foundation for public education, thus contributing to increasing adult literacy. Active participation of NGOs after the 1950s and various support projects for adult literacy and lifelong education also contributed to the reduction of illiteracy.

Need for Further Improvement

Even though Korea has already accomplished the fourth goal of increasing adult literacy, adult literacy education must continue for elder generations and newly arrived immigrants, most of whom are migrant workers and marriage migrants, in order to foster social integration and to improve basic learning skills.

Goal 5 *Achieving Gender Parity and Equality*

Progress

Korea achieved gender equality in primary education around 1975. In 1975, female GER surpassed male GER, and NER were equalized. Gender accessibilities to education in middle and high school were achieved in the late 1980s and 1990s, respectively. Since the year 2000, gender equality in education has been greatly realized. The male entrance rates for higher education had always kept ahead of the female rates until 2008; however, female students started to exceed male students after 2009, and the reverse gender gap continues to increase. Moreover, the percentage of female teachers in Korea in primary and secondary education has doubled over the last 30 years. In 2013, 98.4% of kindergarten, 76.6% of elementary school, 67.5% of middle school and 48.1% of high school teachers are women.

Strategy

Korea advocates gender parity and equality in education by law. The Framework Act on Education enacted in 1997 states the promotion of equal education of men and women and cultivation of healthy gender consciousness. In 1995, the Framework Act on Women's Development was legislated to ensure equal educational opportunities for female learners. Furthermore, by establishing plans and evaluating the level of achievement annually, efforts to achieve gender equality in education have had a measurable impact. The Five-Year Economic and Social Development Plan and the Basic Plan for Women's Policies are examples of policies with positive results.

Need for Further Improvement

Gender segregation in majors is still a stark reality in the higher education sector. Despite efforts to foster women's participation in science and technology fields since 2004, the percentage of female students in such fields is still very low. Furthermore, even though the percentage of female teachers has rapidly increased, percentage of female managerial positions in education do not correspond to that of female teachers; this gender discrepancy needs to be addressed in future policy directions.

Goal 6 *Improving the Quality of Education*

Progress

Education in the Republic of Korea shows satisfactory enrolment rates, dropout rates, and transition rates. Korean students' also have outstanding academic achievement in internationally comparative assessments such as PISA and TIMSS. For example, in TIMSS 2011, Korean students ranked first in mathematics and third in science among 42 participating countries. The Republic of Korea also has its strength in quality teachers. Most school teachers have a bachelor's degrees or higher. They have been recruited through an open-selection process since 1990. Various training programmes from more than 140 teacher training organizations also aid the quality of teaching and learning in Korea.

Strategies

Transition of the national curriculum contributed to improving the quality of education. Among the revisions that took place 9 times since 1948, the 6th Curriculum proposed that the management of educational quality needed to be strengthened. The evaluation system for this was established in the 7th Curriculum. A national-level assessment system of learning outcomes, such as the National Assessment of Educational Achievement (NAEA) and the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT), can also account for the high quality of Korean education. Regular participation in international comparative studies of student assessment such as PISA and TIMSS has also been helpful in improving the quality of education by providing comparable data of competencies and implications for the improvement of curriculum and educational policies.

Need for Further Improvement

Private expenditures on supplementary education need to be reduced. Many Korean students participate in supplementary education to be able to facilitate admission to top universities; oftentimes this competitiveness goes beyond a reasonable level both in terms of energy and finances. Also, Korean students tend to show much lower affective achievements compared to cognitive domains. The Korean education system needs to discover what students find difficult and make efforts to improve affective achievements related to core competencies. The achievement gaps between schools and regions also need to be addressed.

III. Conclusion

This report extensively demonstrated that ROK has already achieved most of the EFA goals, revealing its relevant policies and progress. Hence, the following conclusion section will underline key issues and future directions of education development in ROK connected with a post-2015 education agenda.

3.1 Endeavors for Quality Education in a Korean Context

It has been widely acknowledged that education is a public good and a fundamental human right, which is upheld by all states (UNESCO, 2013; Education International, 2013). ROK has endeavored to implement this long lasting principle of education in practice over the last half century. Indeed, despite several national crises, education was an integral factor in Korea's development to an advanced economy. It can be argued that behind Korea's economic success is the people's passion for, and state investment in, education. While achieving most of the EFA goals in the ROK, the Korean government has emphasized quality education for all and education for happiness for a sustainable and democratic society. Korea aims to guarantee the right to a quality education for all through steady investment in an educated and highly skilled body of human resources (Ministry of Education, 2013). Korea aims to improve all aspects of its education sector and to ensure excellence for all.

However, it is important to note that Korea's quality education has a peculiar context. After rapid progress and successful achievement of education in a quantitative dimension, Korea has confronted many challenges in the quality of education as a side-effect from intense educational development. Indeed, though Korean students are achieving high scores in international academic achievement evaluations and steadily ranking among the top in globally representative evaluations such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (TIMSS), such high achievement does not always equate to the quality education in a holistic dimension. In this context, quality education allows learners to seek a creative and self-directed life, release from intense competition of schooling, and nurturing of non-cognitive dimension of learning such as creativity, critical thinking skill, self-regulated capacity, morality, cooperative mindset and

social responsibility. Thus, Korea's quality of education goes beyond cognitive learning outcomes and academic achievement, and relates more to non-cognitive dimensions of educational development, including learners' self empowerment and happiness.

Korean governmental ethos addresses "achieving economic rejuvenation, the happiness of the people, and the flourishing of our culture." Along this vein, recently, the Ministry of Education emphasized the Education for Learners' Happiness through its education policy directions. Today, Korean educational philosophy reinforces humanitarianism so that learners can enjoy a restoration of humanity through education. This philosophy is reflected in Article 2 of the Fundamentals of Education Act (Ministry of Education, 2013). Despite Korea's excellent academic achievements in educational development, the Article calls for us to rebuild quality education for all in a comprehensive way. This learnt lesson provides new insight into quality education in the 21st century in the Asia-Pacific region.

3.2 Challenges, Issues and Strategy

The Korean government systematically manages the entire educational system, courses and policy directions at a national level. With the support of research institutions specializing in education, today, the government uniformly conceptualizes and carries out education plans (KEDI, 2014). However, despite successful achievement of EFA goals and amazing academic achievements in Korea, Korean education still has much to improve. The following are challenges to overcome:

- Growing achievement gap between high and low income students
- Top ranking academic achievement and low level of happiness among students
- Better focus on a humanistic tradition and quality (over quantity) of learning
- Education welfare for disadvantaged learners and marginalized groups

The national capacity gained from education drove Korea's economic, political, social and cultural development. The Korean government's education plans worked in harmony with the Five-Year Economic Development Plans that started from the 1960s onwards to educate expert manpower necessary for national development. Thus, improved national capacity in turn led to further educational development. In this regard, the Korean government has continuously expanded the provision of free education to all students in a step-by-step manner. Universal education began with free primary education in 1959, expanded to free middle school education from 1985 to 2005 and will expand to free high school education by 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013). Furthermore, the college enrolment rate in Korea jumped from 27.2 percent in 1980 to 72.0 percent in 2012 (KEDI, 2014). Such a jump indicates that most Koreans are receiving some form

of tertiary education. However, although the government has tried to ensure high-quality free education to all and expansion of educational opportunities, the gap in academic achievement between high income students and low income students has been increasing (KEDI, 2014). While education has contributed to social integration in Korea by promoting mobility between different classes and family backgrounds, it still does not guarantee social mobility. Criticism towards the education system purport that education in Korean society exacerbates socioeconomic polarization. In addition, due to excessive investment in private tutoring and high competition, the private costs of education add a continuously growing burden to students and their families.

Korea needs to widen diverse educational opportunities to develop one's potentials, dreams and talents, which have previously been limited. Education has been focused mainly on acquiring knowledge and competency and not enough on humanistic education for personal development. Furthermore, it has been critically argued that the overheated college entrance competition excessively burdens students (Ministry of Education, 2013). In this regard, it is no surprise that the happiness index for Korean teenagers was the lowest among the 23 OECD member states for the third consecutive year, according to a survey from two institutions of the Bang Jeong-hwan Foundation and the Institute for Social Development Studies at Yonsei University. The "subjective well-being index" for Korean students between the ages of 10 and 18 was 65.98, far lower than the OECD average of 100, the survey showed (Korea Herald, 4th May 2011). Thus, the Korean government's new policy directions focus on learners' happiness, creativity and quality of education in order to tackle these challenges.

First, the Ministry of Education has decided to introduce a "free semester system" in all middle schools in 2016. The new program will allow middle school students to be released from the pressure of written tests for one semester to explore their talents and aptitudes and map out their future careers. This program aims to implement the educational vision of "realizing happy education and nurturing creative talents," that is to say, instead of exam-centered learning, students are allowed to take part in a variety of school education activities such as career-exploring activities, club-oriented activities, art and sports-centered activities and improving their physical and mental health.

Second, a new discourse of education stresses a "quality of learning engaging with creativity." Korea is working to create an educational system that would educate excellent and creative manpower to lead the creative economy (Prime Minister's Office, 2014). Also, Korea is pursuing an educational direction that would help students self-realize and self-develop even after joining the workforce. Along this effort, Ministry of Education endeavors support schools so that students can receive holistic education, reinforcing humanistic learning and creativity.

Third, education welfare policy plays an important role to address socioeconomic polarization and empower disadvantaged learners and marginalized groups in Korea. In 2010, Korea enacted a policy that established an educational support system that reflects students' characteristics, developmental stages and family backgrounds, thereby providing an education service sensitive to people's different needs (Ministry of Education, 2014). For example, the Korean government started to reinforce customized support for students from multicultural families and North Korean refugees by providing mentoring services and personal consultation so that learners continue to receive the necessary education. Indeed, Korea's current statistic of demographical change indicates that Korean society has become increasingly heterogeneous, multiracial and multicultural. The number of foreign residents living in Korea reached an all-time high this year to over 1.60 million people, accounting for 3 percent of the country's total population (Prime Minister's Office, 2014). In this context, education welfare helps to provide better educational provisions for disadvantaged learners who come from multicultural backgrounds. Also, Korea now provides tuition support for low-income families, such as national basic livelihood security recipients, single parent families and near-poor families (Ministry of Education, 2013). Indeed, Korea is pursuing educational policies to guarantee equal educational opportunities for all regardless of learners' socioeconomic backgrounds in order to empower underprivileged groups' potential and strengthen social integration through educational provisions. This strategy also links with the After School Program, which supplements university scholarship systems by providing free high school education for all.

3.3 Korea's Move Forward in Post 2015 Education Context

Ongoing consultation of global agreement on education is creating new goals and policy directions for a post-2015 education agenda. The EFA Steering Committee recently developed the Joint Proposal on Education Beyond 2015. Thus, a new framework of action in a post-2015 context will be adopted at the 2015 World Education Forum in Incheon, Republic of Korea from May 19-21. The Joint Proposal has proposed a single overarching goal and seven global targets for a post-2015 education agenda.

The EFA Steering Committee proposed to “ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030.” This proposal reinforces equity and inclusion, expanding quality education at all levels. Accordingly, education should take a holistic and lifelong learning approach (UNESCO, 2014: 2). The Committee also addresses “education as a development priority” and everyone's right to education, which enables the realization of other economic, social and cultural rights and becomes a catalyst for positive societal change, social justice and peace. This approach is in accord with the Korean trajectory of educational development over the last half century and its ongoing

educational policies. Korean education has played as a significant catalyst to drive national development and social progress. Korea values education as a basic human right as stipulated in Article 1 of the UNESCO Charter and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations (Ministry of Education, 2013). In practical dimensions, the Korean government has further built a lifelong education system to expand educational opportunities while amending the Lifelong Education Act in 1999. Such policy directions could improve Korean people's quality of life and enhance their capabilities, thus building up the basis for a lifelong education society. The Korean lifelong learning system could also guarantee the opportunity for continued self-development due to the Ministry of Education's diverse policies, including a school credit bank system, self-study degrees and part-time school registration. In this sense, the overarching goal of global education accommodates Korea's education context to a large extent. It is also important to note that Korea's post-EFA agenda emphasizes the assurance of not only 'equity' but also 'excellence' for all.

Additionally, the Joint Proposal on Education Beyond 2015 proposed seven targets to assess its overarching goal of ensuring equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030. The targets can be classified into two types: outcome and input targets.

While Korea has achieved most of the seven targets above, the government is reshaping a new vision for educational development for a post-2015 education agenda. To reconstruct the currently strict education system, the Ministry of Education is making an effort to realize creative and enjoyable learning within formal education. Korea is seeking a crucial shift in school education from rote learning and teacher-centered instruction towards practice-based learning and student-centered instruction. Recently, 25% participate in the creative management school program to provide character education and tailored programmes in an effort to enhance students' academic skills and provide innovative curriculums (Ministry of Education, 2014). The government is also expanding the departmentalized classroom system so that learners move to different classrooms for different subjects. This strengthens creative hands-on activities. Lastly, the Korean government has expanded ICT in education to enhance innovation teaching and learning and widening learning accessibility for all.

In relation to target 4 of knowledge and skills for decent work and life in a Korean context, Korea is educating future professionals through vocational education closely connected to the industrial sector in the knowledge economy. By expanding the designation of specialized high schools and Meister High Schools, Korea is enhancing industry-centered educational courses. The goal of this policy direction emphasizes an educational system wherein learners can study what they like and still enhance their employability.

OVERARCHING GOAL

Ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030

I. OUTCOME TARGETS

Target 1:

By 2030, at least x% of girls and boys are ready for primary school through participation in quality early childhood care and education, including at least one year of free and compulsory pre-primary education, with particular attention to gender equality and the most marginalized.

Target 2:

By 2030, all girls and boys complete free and compulsory quality basic education of at least 9 years and achieve relevant learning outcomes, with particular attention to gender equality and the most marginalized ...

Target 3:

By 2030, all youth and at least x% of adults reach a proficiency level in literacy and numeracy sufficient to fully participate in society, with particular attention to girls and women and the most marginalized ...

Target 4:

By 2030, at least x% of youth and y% of adults have the knowledge and skills for decent work and life through technical and vocational, upper secondary and tertiary education and training, with particular attention to gender equality and the most marginalized ...

Target 5:

By 2030, all learners acquire knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to establish sustainable and peaceful societies, including through global citizenship education and education for sustainable development.

II. INPUT TARGETS

Target 6:

By 2030, all governments ensure that all learners are taught by qualified, professionally-trained, motivated and well-supported teachers.

Target 7:

By 2030, all countries allocate at least 4-6% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or at least 15-20% of their public expenditure to education, prioritizing groups most in need; and strengthen financial cooperation for education, prioritizing countries most in need.

Source: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2014). *Joint Proposal of the EFA Steering Committee on Education Post-2015*. released on 4th June 2014, Paris: EFA Steering Committee

In particular, the Korean government pays high attention to target 5 of acquiring knowledge, skills, values and attitudes on global citizenship education (GCE) to build a sustainable and peaceful world. The notion of global citizenship has recently gained prominence in global development discourses through the UN's Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) in 2012. GCE is an integrative successor of EFA, which incorporates a dimension of peace and cooperation in global education development (Kim et al., 2014). Now, the Korean endeavor to promote the concept of GCE and its practice nationally and internationally contribute to a globally connected society. In its post-2015 education agenda, the Korean government and think tank institutes, including KEDI and KICE, are working together to develop measurable indicators of GCE. It is believed that this approach can broaden a horizon of educational provision to nurture democratic, responsible and sustainable society to produce active global citizens.

Lastly, regarding target 7, the international community's cooperation and partnership is essential to realize such a post-EFA vision. Korea is widely recognized as a country that has achieved remarkable economic development through educational development. But Korea acknowledges that this would not have been possible without the help of the international community. Thus, Korea is dedicated to returning all the support received from the international community (Ministry of Education, 2013). By becoming a member of the OECD DAC in 2010, Korea is enhancing its role in international development cooperation projects. Furthermore, as a host country of the 2015 World Education Forum, Korea is actively moving forward to realize a post-2015 education agenda. Korea can lead the international community's global education agenda covering the next 20 to 30 years. Korea will contribute to reaching the international goal of eradicating poverty through education and ensuring the right to education for all. Ultimately, it is crucial to draw a long-term plan of action for post-2015 educational development that empowers all. The future of global education should be implemented in a comprehensive and equitable process nationally, regionally and globally in this inter-connected world.

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Annexes

<Annex 1> Enrolment Rate for Primary School by Sex

Year	GER			NER		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1965	97.7	98.8	96.5	88.9	90.4	87.3
1970	100.7	101.1	100.2	92.0	92.5	91.3
1975	105.0	104.7	105.3	97.8	97.7	97.8
1980	102.9	102.1	103.7	97.7	97.2	98.1
1985	99.9	99.6	100.1	N/A	N/A	N/A
1990	101.7	101.3	102.2	100.5	100.1	101.0
1995	100.1	99.9	100.3	98.2	97.9	98.4
2000	98.7	98.2	99.3	97.2	96.7	97.8
2001	98.5	98.2	98.9	97.4	97.1	97.8
2002	98.7	98.4	99.1	97.6	97.3	98.0
2003	100.0	99.8	100.1	98.6	98.4	98.8
2004	100.1	100.0	100.2	98.1	98.0	98.2
2005	100.2	100.2	100.1	98.8	98.7	98.9
2006	100.2	100.1	100.2	98.9	98.8	99.0
2007	100.8	100.9	100.8	99.5	99.4	99.6
2008	101.2	101.2	101.3	99.5	99.3	99.7
2009	100.9	100.9	101.0	98.5	98.4	98.7
2010	100.7	100.8	100.6	99.2	99.2	99.2
2011	101.1	101.4	100.8	99.1	99.2	98.9
2012	101.0	101.4	100.5	98.6	98.8	98.3
2013	99.9	100.3	99.5	97.2	97.4	96.9

Note: 1. NER in 1985 nonexistent due to the lack of data for primary school students by age

2. Students who went to school before they reach the required age were not counted until 1995. This led to the situation where NER exceeds 100%.

3. The Korean population number is based on the Korean population census conducted every 5 years. Therefore, the population may be different from 2011.

Source: Ministry of Education. (2013). *Statistical Yearbook of Education*. Ministry of Education & Korean Education Development Institute. Retrieved from <http://kess.kedi.re.kr/index>

Statistics Korea. (2012). Population Projection for Korea. Retrieved from http://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1B01001&conn_path=I2

<Annex 2> Enrolment Rate for Middle School by Sex

Year	GER			NER		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1970	51.2	61.1	40.6	36.6	43.0	29.7
1975	71.9	80.1	63.1	56.2	62.3	49.7
1980	95.1	97.5	92.5	73.3	75.5	70.9
1985	100.1	100.5	99.6	82.0	82.3	81.7
1990	98.2	97.9	98.5	91.6	91.2	92.0
1995	101.6	101.4	101.8	93.5	93.4	93.7
2000	99.5	99.1	100.0	95.0	94.3	95.8
2001	98.7	98.2	99.3	95.7	95.1	96.3
2002	98.3	97.9	98.6	94.8	94.7	94.9
2003	96.3	95.9	96.8	93.1	92.6	93.6
2004	96.9	96.5	97.3	92.3	91.7	93.0
2005	97.7	97.3	98.1	94.6	94.2	95.0
2006	99.0	98.8	99.2	96.0	95.6	96.4
2007	98.4	98.5	98.2	95.9	95.8	95.9
2008	98.4	98.7	98.0	93.2	93.4	93.0
2009	98.8	99.2	98.3	95.9	96.1	95.7
2010	100.0	100.0	100.0	97.0	96.9	97.1
2011	99.9	99.7	100.0	96.7	96.3	97.2
2012	99.5	99.1	99.9	96.1	95.4	96.8
2013	99.8	99.9	99.6	96.2	96.1	96.4

Note: The Korean population number is based on the Korean population census conducted every 5 years. Therefore, the population may be different from 2011.

Source: Ministry of Education. (2013). *Statistical Yearbook of Education*. Ministry of Education & Korean Education Development Institute. Retrieved from <http://kess.kedi.re.kr/index>
 Statistics Korea. (2012). *Population Projection for Korea*. Retrieved from http://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1B01001&conn_path=I2

<Annex 3> Enrolment Rate for High School by Sex

Year	GER			NER		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1970	28.1	34.2	21.6	20.3	23.6	16.9
1975	41.0	49.0	32.5	31.3	36.1	26.2
1980	63.5	70.3	56.2	48.8	52.9	44.3
1985	79.5	83.2	75.5	64.2	66.5	61.7
1990	88.0	90.5	85.4	79.4	81.4	77.2
1995	91.8	92.4	91.3	82.9	83.3	82.4
2000	95.6	95.7	95.5	89.4	89.5	89.4
2001	94.7	94.8	94.5	89.7	89.7	89.7
2002	93.6	94.0	93.1	88.2	88.5	87.9
2003	94.3	94.7	93.9	89.3	89.6	88.9
2004	94.3	94.8	93.8	89.3	89.7	89.0
2005	94.6	94.7	94.5	91.0	91.0	91.0
2006	92.6	92.5	92.7	89.8	89.6	90.1
2007	92.5	92.2	92.9	90.4	90.1	90.8
2008	92.8	92.3	93.3	89.0	88.5	89.5
2009	94.0	93.7	94.4	91.4	91.1	91.8
2010	93.9	93.9	93.9	91.5	91.4	91.6
2011	94.2	94.4	93.9	91.9	91.9	91.9
2012	95.1	95.4	94.8	92.6	92.6	92.6
2013	96.5	96.4	96.6	93.6	93.4	93.8

Note: The Korean population number is based on the Korean population census conducted every 5 years. Therefore, the population may be different from 2011.

Source: Ministry of Education. (2013). *Statistical Yearbook of Education*. Ministry of Education & Korean Education Development Institute. Retrieved from <http://kess.kedi.re.kr/index>

Statistics Korea. (2012). *Population Projection for Korea*. Retrieved from http://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1B01001&conn_path=I2

<Annex 4> Female Students' Rate in Tertiary Education by Major (Fields)

(Unit: %)

ISCED Level Fields	University (5A)			College (5B)		
	2000	2005	2010	2000	2005	2010
Total: All Fields of Education	35.7	37.0	39.3	35.8	37.4	39.7
Education	63.0	61.0	64.3	71.3	77.8	94.9
Humanities and Arts	59.4	59.8	58.6	50.8	48.9	52.7
Social Sciences, Business and Law	33.8	35.3	38.0	38.9	36.3	43.5
Science	38.0	33.4	30.9	27.4	17.5	15.8
Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	15.9	17.3	18.8	17.7	14.5	13.8
Agriculture	28.7	30.5	33.6	25.8	37.6	37.1
Health and Welfare	52.2	57.0	60.2	71.5	68.9	66.8
Services	28.5	26.7	27.4	38.4	34.8	37.9

Note: The education level is based on ISCED97.

Source: Annual UOE data collection.

<Annex 5> Female Managerial Position Rate by School Level (2013)

(Unit: %)

	Total	Principals	Vice Principals
Pre-Primary	98.4	90.9	99.3
Primary	76.6	18.6	45.1
Lower Secondary	67.5	20.0	26.6
Upper Secondary	48.1	8.7	9.7

Sources: Ministry of Education. (2013). Statistical Yearbook of Education. Ministry of Education & Korean Education Development Institute. Retrieved from <http://kess.kedi.re.kr/index>

¹Korea submitted its EFA Report in 2000, yet this report is the first one to reflect the perspective of gender parity following the Dakar Framework for Action. Therefore, for more up to date progress, major statistical data from the 1970s to the present day requires further analyses.

²GRE (Gross enrolment ratio) is an index that shows the general level of participation in a given level of education. The number of students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponds to the same level of education, thus GER can exceed 100% due to the inclusion of over-aged and under-aged students because of early or late entrants, and possible grade repetition. (Source: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/Glossary.aspx>).

³NER (Net enrolment rate) means total number of students in the theoretical age group for a given level of education enrolled in that level, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group that shows the extent of coverage in a given level of education of children and youths belonging to the official age group corresponding to the given level of education. NER cannot exceed 100%. (Source: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/Glossary.aspx>).

한국 EFA 국가보고서 한글 요약

1. 서론

1990년 쾰른에서 본격적으로 시작되고 2000년 다카르를 거쳐, 이제 국제사회는 2015년 인천에서 그 동안 유네스코를 중심으로 펼쳐온 ‘모두를 위한 교육(Education for All: 이하 EFA)’ 활동에 대한 평가와 함께 향후 2030년까지의 지구촌 교육발전 방향과 협력 방안을 모색하려 하고 있다.

이런 점에서 2014년 국제사회가 공유하는 각국의 EFA 국가보고서는 해당 국가적 수준에서는 물론 국제적 수준에서도 매우 중요한 의미를 갖고 있다. 대한민국 역시 국제사회의 구성원으로서 그 중요성을 인식하고 교육부를 중심으로 특히, EFA의 여섯 가지 목표와 관련하여 전문성을 지닌 국내 유관기관 소속의 연구진들이 협력하여 이번 국가보고서를 작성하였다.¹⁾

국제사회에 널리 알려진 바와 같이, 대한민국은 1910년부터 1945년까지 식민지로서 아픈 경험을 거쳤고, 1950년부터 1953년까지 한국전쟁의 참화를 겪었다. 그런 이유로 정치, 경제, 사회, 문화 모든 분야에서 극도로 피폐한 상황에 놓여 있었다. 그러나 반세기만 지난 오늘날 대한민국은 산업화로 상징되는 경제발전과 민주화로 상징되는 사회 발전을 이룩하였다. 그리고 이러한 경제발전과 사회발전의 결정적인 요인의 하나로 많은 국내외 전문가들은 대한민국의 ‘교육발전’을 꼽는다.

하지만, 항상 반대급부도 있기 마련이다. 급속한 경제적, 사회적 발전이 그에 따른 부작용을 수반하듯이 대한민국의 급속한 교육발전 또한 해결해야 할 여러 가지 과제를 안고 있다.

그러므로 이번 EFA 국가보고서에서는 EFA의 여섯 가지 목표를 달성하기까지의 개략적인 분야 별 추진과정과 주요 정책 및 전략의 소개에만 그치지 않고 직면하고 있는 향후 과제를 제시함으로써 다른 나라들과 경험 및 의견을 공유하면서 post-EFA에 대한 논의에도 기여하고자 한다.

1) 이번 보고서 작성에 직접 참여한 연구진은 유네스코한국위원회, 한국교육개발원, 국가평생교육진흥원, 한국교육아정책연구소, 한국여성정책연구원 등 유관기관 소속의 국제교육협력 담당자들이 주축을 이루었다.

2. 목표 달성 검토

목표 1. 영유아 보육 및 교육의 확대

진척 상황

한국의 영유아 보육과 교육은 지난 15년 간 상당한 발전을 이루었다. 만5세 아동의 무상 보육과 교육은 1999년 농어촌지역에서 최초로 시행되었다. 이 정책은 2012년에 모든 만5세 아동 대상으로 확대 적용되어 보편화되었고, 2013년에는 만3-4세 아동까지 포함하며 확대 실시되었다. 또한 2012년 이후로 0-2세 영유아에게 무상 보육이 제공되기 시작했고, 영유아 보육 및 교육 서비스를 이용하지 않고 집에서 아이를 양육하는 부모들에게는 양육수당이 지급되었다. 유치원 아동 1인 당 영유아 보육·교육 예산은 2005년에서 2012년 사이 3.5배 증가했다. 서비스의 질적인 측면에서도 상당한 진척을 보였는데, 예컨대 학사 학위를 소지한 유치원 교사의 비율이 2001년 26.3%였던 것에 비해, 2012년에는 50%를 넘었다.

정책/전략 분석

영유아 보육 및 교육은 한국의 출산율 저하, 직장을 가진 어머니의 수 증가, 영유아기 발달의 중요성에 대한 인식 제고 등의 요소가 작용하면서 국가 정책 의제의 우선순위를 차지하게 되었다. 농어촌 지역 아동 무상보육 및 교육(1999), 다자녀 가구 보조금 지급(2005), 양육수당 지급(2010)과 같은 다양한 정책이 도입되었고 재정적 지원이 수반되었다. 2013년 영유아 보육 및 교육의 일 년 예산은 2005년 예산의 세 배로 증가하여 약 12조원에 이르렀다. 교육의 질 또한 향상했다. 2007년에는 보육교사자격관리사무국을 도입했고, 2010년에는 교사와 기관에 맞춤 상담을 제공하는 상담체계를 구축했다.

향후 과제

영유아 보육과 교육은 여러 분야에 걸쳐있는 속성을 지니기 때문에 건강, 영양, 성 역량강화, 노동, 경제와 같은 여러 영역들 간 협력 강화가 중요하다. 또한 공공 서비스와 민간 서비스 간 활발한 네트워크 형성과 교류, 유치원 아동 대 교사 비율의 향상, 그리고 보다 활발한 부모의 교육 참여가 요구된다.

목표 2. 초등교육 및 중등교육의 보편화²⁾

진척 상황

학령기 청소년의 최소 95%가 학교에 등록한 경우를 ‘보편화’라고 정의할 때, 한국은 1960년대 초에 초등교육 보편화를 달성했다. 중학교 교육 보편화는 1980년대 초에, 고

2) EFA 6대 목표 가운데 2번 목표는 초등교육의 보편화로 중등교육 보편화는 포함되어 있지 않으나, 중등교육 보편화까지 이루어진 한국 상황을 감안하여 한국의 EFA 국가보고서에서는 중등교육의 보편화까지 포함하여 기술하였다.

등학교 교육은 1990년대 말에 달성했다. 초등학교의 총 등록률(Gross Enrolment Rate, GER)은 1960년에 95.3%였고, 중학교는 1980년에 95.1%였으며, 고등학교는 1998년에 95%를 넘었다. 이와 비슷한 총 등록률이 현재까지 계속되고 있는데, 2012년을 기준으로 초등학교 총 등록률은 98.6%, 중학교는 96.1%, 고등학교는 92.6%이었다.

정책/전략 분석

한국에서는 헌법과 교육기본법에 의해 9년 간의 양질의 기초교육이 법적으로 보장되고 또한 요구된다. 국가의 강한 정치적 헌신(political commitment)은 기초교육 보편화 달성에 중요한 역할을 했다. 1954년부터 1959년까지 진행된 ‘의무교육완성 6개년계획’은 한 가지 예이다. 한국은 정부 예산의 상당 부분을 교육에 투자했고, 보편화(universalization) 단계 초기에는 초등교육에 집중했다. 교육을 중시하는 한국의 문화 또한 기초교육 보편화 달성의 성공 요인 중 하나라고 할 수 있다.

향후 과제

우선 상대적으로 높은 교사 대 학생 비율이 검토되어야 한다. 2012년 초등학교의 평균 학급 규모는 24.3이었고, 중학교 32.4, 고등학교 31.9였다. 또한, 이제는 단순히 높은 등록률과 학업성취를 보여주는 것을 넘어, 학생들의 창의력을 길러주고 학생들로 하여금 학습의 즐거움을 알 수 있게 해주는 교육이 되어야 한다.

목표 3. 청소년과 성인의 학습 촉진

진척 상황

중등교육 보편화와 평생교육의 체계화는 한국의 청소년 및 성인의 학습과 생활기술 향상에 기여했다. 중등교육은 1960년대와 1970년대에 급속도로 팽창하기 시작했다. 특히 1974년에는 방송통신고등학교가 설립되었고, 산업체 부설 중·고등학교와 일반 중·고등학교가 형식교육을 이수하지 못한 사람들에게 특별야간과정을 제공하도록 하는 교육정책이 도입되었다. 강력한 정부의 지원에 힘입어 직업교육 및 훈련 또한 상당히 강화되었다. 평생교육과 관련된 일련의 법이 제정된 이후, 2007년에는 평생학습 정책의 계획과 시행을 위한 중앙정부조직으로서 국가평생교육진흥원이 설립되기도 했다.

정책/전략 분석

직업고등학교를 장려하고 직업훈련체계를 강화하는 정책들은 1970년대 한국의 성공적인 산업화에 기여했다. 반대로 보면 노동시장의 수요가 직업기술교육과 훈련을 촉진하는 역할을 하기도 했다. 다양화된 평생교육체계가 제공한 학습기회들도 EFA 세 번째 목표를 달성하는 데 기여했다. 방송통신 중·고등학교, 방송통신대학교, 학점은행제, 독학학위제는 모든 시민이 교육 기회를 누릴 수 있도록 했다.

향후 과제

사회 소외계층의 평생교육과 그들의 직업능력 향상을 지원할 필요가 있다. 또한 은퇴·노령인구로 하여금 특기를 발전시켜 취업 기회로 연결될 수 있도록 하는 일도 필요하다. 이를 위해서는 지역사회학의 학습 능력이 강화되어야 한다.

목표 4. 성인문해 증진

진척 상황

한국의 비문해율은 1930년에 발표된 최초의 비문해 국가보고서에서 77.7%로 보고된 이후 지속적으로 감소했다. 1948년 비문해율은 42%였고, 1968년에는 14.7%였다. 문해에 대한 가장 최근의 조사는 2008년에 시행되었는데, 이 조사에서는 19-79세 성인 중 비문해자가 전체의 1.7%라고 보고되었다. 하지만 연령과 성별에 따른 차이가 발견되기도 했다. 예를 들어, 70대의 비문해율은 20.2%이었던 데 반해 50대의 비문해율은 0.7%였고, 19-49세 성인의 비문해율은 0%로 나타났다. 한편, 남성의 비문해율은 0.5%인 반면 여성의 비문해율은 2.7%로 나타나 성별 간 비문해율 격차가 존재함이 밝혀졌다.

정책/전략 분석

비문해 감소의 성공요인은 정부주도의 정책과 프로그램이라 할 수 있다. 예를 들어, 정부가 비문해율을 감소시키기 위해 각 지방에서 교육 프로그램을 실시한 1950년대의 '문맹퇴치 5개년 사업'은 1960년까지 비문해율이 급격히 감소하는 데 기여하였다. 더불어 '의무교육완성 6개년계획'은 공공교육의 토대를 세웠고, 성인문해를 증진시키는 데 기여했다. 또한 1950년대 이후 적극적인 NGO들의 참여와 다양한 성인문해 및 평생교육 지원 프로젝트들이 비문해 감소에 기여했다.

향후 과제

한국은 성인문해 증진 목표를 이미 달성했다고도 말할 수 있겠다. 그러나 노령세대와 새로운 이주민(이들 중 대부분은 이주 노동자이거나 결혼 이주민)들을 대상으로 성인문해교육을 계속해나가야 할 필요성이 있다. 이는 궁극적으로 사회통합과 기초학습 기술 향상에 기여할 것이다.

목표 5. 교육에서의 성 평등 달성

진척 상황

한국은 초등교육에서 성 평등을 1975년 즈음에 달성했다고 말할 수 있다. 1975년을 기준으로, 여성의 총 등록률(GER)은 남성 총 등록률(GER)을 능가했고, 취학률(Net Enrolment Rate, NER)은 동등했다. 중학교과 고등학교에서의 교육 접근성 성 평등은

각각 1980년대 후반과 1990년대에 달성됐다. 2000년 이후에는 교육에서의 성 평등에 대한 인식이 더더욱 커졌다. 2008년까지 남학생의 고등교육 진학률은 여학생의 진학률을 앞섰으나, 2009년 이후 여학생이 남학생을 추월하기 시작했고, 기존의 성 격차와는 반대 양상을 띤 성 격차가 계속해서 증가하고 있다. 또한 초중등교육 여성교사의 비율이 지난 30년간 두 배로 증가해, 2013년 기준으로 유치원 교사의 98.4%, 초등학교 교사의 76.6%, 중학교 교사의 67.5%, 고등학교 교사의 48.1%가 여교사였다.

정책/전략 분석

한국은 교육에서의 성 평등을 법으로 보장한다. 1997년 제정된 교육기본법은 남성과 여성의 평등한 교육 보장과 건강한 성 의식 함양을 명시하고 있다. 1995년에는 여성학 습자의 평등한 교육기회 보장을 위한 여성발전기본법이 제정되었다. 성 평등을 달성하기 위한 노력은 매년 계획을 수립하고 성취 수준을 평가함으로써 주목할 만한 성과를 얻었다. ‘경제사회발전 5개년계획’과 ‘여성정책기본계획’은 긍정적 결과를 얻은 정책의 예이다.

향후 과제

고등교육 분야에서 성 차별은 여전히 존재한다. 2004년부터 과학기술분야에의 여성 참여를 증진시키기 위한 노력들이 있었음에도 불구하고, 이 분야의 여학생 비율은 여전히 매우 낮다. 또한, 빠르게 증가하고 있는 여성 교사 수에 비해 관리자급 여성의 비율은 그리 높지 않다. 이러한 불평등은 향후 정책적으로 검토되어야 할 것이다.

목표 6. 교육의 질 향상

진척 상황

한국의 교육은 만족할 만한 등록률과, 중퇴율, 진학률을 보이고 있고, 한국 학생들은 PISA와 TIMSS 같은 국제비교평가에서 우수한 학업 성취도를 보이고 있다. 일례로 2011년 TIMSS에서 한국 학생들은 42개 참가국 중 수학 분야에서 1위, 과학 분야에서 3위를 차지했다. 한국의 교사 수준 또한 높다. 대부분의 교사는 학사 학위 이상을 소지하고 있고, 1990년 이후에는 공개채용 방식을 통해 채용되고 있다. 140개 이상의 교사 연수기관을 통한 다양한 연수 프로그램도 한국의 교수·학습의 질을 향상시키는 데 기여하고 있다.

정책/전략 분석

1948년 이후 아홉 번의 개정을 거친 국가교육과정은 교육의 질 향상에 기여했다. 그 중 6차 교육과정은 교육의 질 관리가 강화되어야 함을 제안했고, 7차 교육과정에서는 이를 위한 평가체계가 형성되었다. 국가 수준의 학업성취도평가, 대학수학능력시험과 같은 학습결과에 대한 국가 수준의 평가 체계 또한 양질의 한국 교육에 기여한다. 또한,

PISA, TIMSS와 같은 국가 간 비교 연구에의 정기적 참여는 역량 비교 데이터와 교육과정 및 교육 정책 향상에 대한 시사점을 제공하여 교육의 질 향상에 도움이 되었다.

향후 과제

사교육에 대한 지출이 감소되어야 한다. 많은 한국 학생들은 상위 대학교 입학에 위해 사교육에 참여하는데, 경쟁은 때로 에너지와 재정 측면에서 이성적인 수준을 넘어서기도 한다. 한편, 한국 학생들은 인지적 영역에 비해 훨씬 낮은 정서적 성취를 보이는 경향이 있다. 따라서 한국의 교육 제도는 학생들이 어려움을 느끼는 부분을 찾아내고, 핵심 역량과 관련된 정서적 성취를 향상시키기 위한 노력을 기울여야 하며, 학교와 지역별 성취도 차이 또한 검토해야 한다.

결론

한국 맥락에서 본 양질의 교육

교육은 한국이 눈부신 발전을 이룰 수 있게 한 부정할 수 없는 성공 요인이다. 그러나 양적인 측면에서의 빠른 발전의 이면에는 단기간의 교육 발전이 수반하는 교육의 질적 측면에서의 여러 부작용이 있었다. 한국학생들은 PISA와 TIMSS 같은 국제학업성취평가에서 높은 점수를 얻으며 지속적으로 상위권을 차지하고 있다. 하지만 이때의 높은 성취가 전인적인 차원에서 양질의 교육에 충분하지는 않다.

진정한 양질의 교육은 학습자들이 창의적이고 자기주도적인 삶을 지향하고, 비판적 사고능력, 자기조절능력, 도덕성과 같은 학습의 비인지적 영역을 함양하도록 하는 것이다. 한국의 양질의 교육은 단순히 높은 학업성취도를 내는 것을 넘어, 학습자들의 자기주도적 역량을 강화하고 학습자들로 하여금 행복하게 배우도록 하는 것과 더 연관이 있다. 이러한 시각은 모두를 위한 양질의 교육을 보다 종합적인 방식으로 재구성할 것을 요구하며 향후 국제교육의제 설정에도 새로운 통찰을 제시한다.

과제, 이슈, 전략

한국정부는 전체 교육 체계, 과정, 정책 지시를 국가적 수준에서 제도적으로 관리하고 있다. 그러나 EFA 목표의 성공적인 성취와 우수한 학업성취에도 불구하고 한국의 교육은 여전히 개선의 여지가 많다. 다음은 남아있는 과제들이다.

- 고소득층 학생과 저소득층 학생 간 성취 격차 극복
- 높은 학업성취도에 상반되는 학생들의 낮은 행복수준 개선
- 인문학적 전통과 학습의 질에 대한 보다 많은 관심
- 사회적으로 혜택 받지 못하는 학습자와 소외집단을 위한 교육복지

이러한 과제들을 해결하기 위해 정부는 여러 모로 노력을 기울이고 있다. 예컨대, 중학교 학생들이 한 학기동안 지필고사의 압박으로부터 벗어나 그들의 재능과 적성, 진로를 보다 자유롭게 탐색하고자 하는 목적으로 2016년부터 모든 중학교에 “자유학기제”를 도입할 것을 결정하였다. 또한 창의적인 인력 양성에 보다 집중하고 있으며, 다양한 교육 복지 정책을 통해 사회적으로 혜택 받지 못하는 소외집단 학습자의 역량 강화를 위해 노력하고 있다. 여기에는 이민자 가정, 저소득층 가정 등에 대한 지원, 국가장학금 제도 등이 포함된다.

2015년 이후 교육을 향한 한국의 움직임

2015년 이후 교육에 관한 EFA 운영위원회의 공동제안(joint proposal)은 “2030년 까지 모두를 위한 평등하고 포괄적인 양질의 교육과 평생학습 보장”이라는 포괄목표와 일곱 개의 세부 목표를 제안하였다.

한국은 제안된 일곱 개의 EFA 목표(안)에만 머무는 대신 스스로 2015년 이후 교육 의제의 새로운 비전을 찾고 있다. 예컨대 형식교육 내에서의 창의적이고 즐거운 학습 실현을 위해 노력하고 있으며, 기존의 암기 위주 학습, 교사 중심 교육에서 실천 기반 학습, 학생 중심 교육으로의 변화를 추구하고 있다. 또한 혁신적 교수학습을 장려하고 교육에서의 ICT 활용을 확대하고 있다. 전문화고와 마이스터고 지정을 확대함으로써 산업 중심 교육과정을 강화하고, 학습자로 하여금 그들이 흥미 있어 하는 것을 공부하고 이를 취업 기회로 연결시키는 교육 체계를 강조하기도 한다.

제시된 일곱 개의 세부 목표 가운데 한국 정부는 특히 지속가능하고 평화로운 세계를 만들기 위한 세계시민교육(Global Citizenship Education, GCE)이 포함된 다섯 번째 목표에 관심이 많다. 2012년 유엔의 글로벌교육우선구상(Global Education First Initiative, GEFI)에서 세계적 담론으로 대두된 세계시민교육은 세계의 교육 발전에서 평화와 협력 측면을 통합시키며 EFA를 통합적으로 계승한다. 한국은 이 세계시민교육의 국가적, 국제적 실천 활성화를 위해 노력하고 있으며, 지표 개발을 위해서도 노력을 기울이고 있다.

마지막으로, 새로운 EFA 비전은 실현시키기 위해서는 국제사회의 협력과 파트너십이 필수적이라 할 수 있다. 한국은 과거 국제사회의 지원에 힘입어 교육 발전과 기타 사회경제적 발전을 이룬 경험을 잊지 않고 있으며, 2010년 OECD DAC에 가입하는 등 국제사회에 진 빚을 이제는 돌려주고자 많이 노력하고 있다. 2015년 세계교육포럼의 개최(2015.5.19-22/인천)를 계기로 2015년 이후 교육 의제 설정에도 많이 기여하고자 노력하고 있다. 한국은 앞으로 모두를 위한 교육 보장을 통한 빈곤 퇴치라는 국제적 목표를 달성하는 데 선도적 역할을 수행할 것이다.



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